



**This electronic thesis or dissertation has been  
downloaded from Explore Bristol Research,  
<http://research-information.bristol.ac.uk>**

*Author:*  
**Parsons, Gary**

*Title:*  
**"A free-gift to the city of Bristol"**

*Richard Cottrell's Avon Metro project and the changing nature of urban centre transport  
solutions, government and funding, 1979 - 1992.*

**General rights**

Access to the thesis is subject to the Creative Commons Attribution - NonCommercial-No Derivatives 4.0 International Public License. A copy of this may be found at <https://creativecommons.org/licenses/by-nc-nd/4.0/legalcode>. This license sets out your rights and the restrictions that apply to your access to the thesis so it is important you read this before proceeding.

**Take down policy**

Some pages of this thesis may have been removed for copyright restrictions prior to having it been deposited in Explore Bristol Research. However, if you have discovered material within the thesis that you consider to be unlawful e.g. breaches of copyright (either yours or that of a third party) or any other law, including but not limited to those relating to patent, trademark, confidentiality, data protection, obscenity, defamation, libel, then please contact [collections-metadata@bristol.ac.uk](mailto:collections-metadata@bristol.ac.uk) and include the following information in your message:

- Your contact details
- Bibliographic details for the item, including a URL
- An outline nature of the complaint

Your claim will be investigated and, where appropriate, the item in question will be removed from public view as soon as possible.

"A free-gift to the city of Bristol":  
Richard Cottrell's Avon Metro project and the  
changing nature of urban centre transport  
solutions, government and funding, 1979 - 1992.

Gary Parsons

A dissertation submitted to the University of Bristol in accordance with the  
requirements for award of the degree of Master of Philosophy in the Faculty of Arts

School of Humanities  
October 2018

Word Count: 24105



## Abstract

This research identifies that the problems in the structure and finances of the non-metropolitan county of Avon led Richard Cottrell to attempt to recraft transport governance and stimulate urban regeneration using a unique expression of neoliberal ideas. This led to a private company called Advanced Transport for Avon to attempt to build and control a metro system in the city of Bristol without involvement from either tier of local government. Whilst this project was unsuccessful, it was an expression of neoliberalism far more than government neoliberal policies for regeneration at this time, such as enterprise zones and urban development corporations. The project also had key influences on the urban design of the city, attitudes to the automobile and cycling infrastructure both locally and nationally which, until now have been underappreciated. This work charts the extremities and limitations of the neoliberal agenda through the 1980s and early 1990s and the conditions for and consequences of this agenda through a project that attempted to push the boundaries on neoliberalism.





## Dedication and Acknowledgements

*This work is dedicated to those who believe in me.*

I would like to thank first and foremost my supervisors, Hugh Pemberton and Erika Hana for their months of reading and advising on drafts. Your support and guidance has been invaluable throughout. I also wish to thank my parents for giving me the support and security needed for me to focus on my studies. Your love has kept me going throughout the completion of this work. I wish to thank my cousin, Rorie, who has been one of the few people I have been able to bounce ideas off of and discuss theorists with. I also wish to thank all my friends for humouring me as I spent the last three years engaging them with discussions on non-existent tram systems and changing concepts of mobility. There are too many of you to mention, but every conversation we had, I felt my understanding of my work growing.



Authors declaration

I declare that the work in this dissertation was carried out in accordance with the requirements of the University's *Regulations and Code of Practice for Research Degree Programmes* and that it has not been submitted for any other academic award. Except where indicated by specific reference in the text, the work is the candidate's own work. Work done in collaboration with, or with the assistance of, others, is indicated as such. Any views expressed in the dissertation are those of the author.

SIGNED: ..... DATE:.....



## Contents

<b>Introduction</b>	<b>p. 13</b>
Research context.....	p. 13
Research questions.....	p. 15
Literature Review.....	p. 17
Contribution to knowledge.....	p. 28
Source discussion and methodology.....	p. 30
Outline of structure.....	p. 31
 <b>Chapter One - Attempting to work within the structure of transport governance: The Avon Metro 1979 – 1986</b>	 <b>p. 33</b>
The Avon Metro and the shifting attitude towards mobility and the automobile 1979 – 1986.....	p. 37
The Avon Metro and governance of the city, 1979 – 1986.....	p. 42
The changing nature of the city and the emergence of the neoliberal agenda, 1979 – 1986.....	p. 49
Conclusions from chapter one.....	p. 58
 <b>Chapter Two – The rise: Advanced Transport for Avon and the recrafting of transport governance, November 1986 – May 1989</b>	 <b>p. 60</b>
The recrafting of transport governance, 1986 – 1987.....	p. 62
How did the recrafting of transport governance play out, 1987 – 1989?.....	p. 71
The changing attitude towards the automobile and mobility in the urban centre and the development of Advanced Transport for Avon, 1986 – 1989...	p. 79
Conclusions from chapter two.....	p. 88
 <b>Chapter Three – The fall: The second bill and the bankruptcy and demise of Advanced Transport for Avon, May 1989 – March 1992.</b>	 <b>p. 90</b>
The acceptance of the new structure of neoliberal transport governance and the limitations of this structure, 1989 – 1992.....	p. 92
Advanced Transport for Avon and the changing nature of mobility and automobility in the urban centre, 1989 – 1992.....	p. 100
Conclusions from chapter three.....	p.112
 <b>Conclusion</b>	 <b>p.115</b>
 <b>Bibliography</b>	 <b>p. 121</b>
 <b>Appendix 1 – Interview with Jack Penrose</b>	



## List of Illustrations

Fig 1.	Route of proposed underground tunnel.....	p. 34
Fig 2.	Artist's impression of an Avon Metro underground station.....	p. 35
Fig 3.	Avon County wards, 1981.....	p. 45
Fig 4.	Avon Metro Station showing integration between modes.....	p. 51
Fig 5.	Avon Metro underground station and 'metrocar' and bus liveries.....	p. 52
Fig 6.	Avon Metro system map – November 1979.....	p. 54
Fig 7.	Avon Metro Plans 1987 showing different stages.....	p. 65
Fig 8.	Avon Metro proposed completed system map 1987.....	p. 66
Fig 9.	Artist's impression of an Advanced Transport for Avon Supertram...	p. 85
Fig 10.	The Portishead Line.....	p. 86
Fig 11.	Aerial photograph depicting inner circuit road crossing Queen's Square.....	p. 102
Fig 12.	Route of the Bristol to Bath Railway Path through Bristol.....	p. 106
Fig 13.	The entry portal to Staple Hill Tunnel.....	p. 107
Fig 14.	Guided Light Transit Bus.....	p. 110

## List of Abbreviations

ATA	Advanced Transport for Avon
BRT	Bus Rapid Transport
DBOM	Design, Build, Operate and Maintain
DLP	District Labour Party
EEC	European Economic Community
GLC	Greater London Council
GLT	Guided Light Transit
LRT	Light Rapid Transit
MEP	Member of the European Parliament
MP	Member of Parliament
PTA	Passenger Transport Authority
PTE	Passenger Transport Executive
S-Bahn	Stadtbahn
UDC	Urban Development Corporation





## Introduction

### Research Context

The city of Bristol has long suffered from traffic chaos with frequent gridlock, long journey times and high levels of congestion. A Department for Transport report in 2015 has identified that the city is the most congested in the United Kingdom.<sup>1</sup> Despite many proposed solutions throughout the post-war period, including the construction of elevated walkways separating pedestrian and automobile, or the filling in its harbour to construct an inner ring road, the city has never fully dealt with its traffic problems. This research will look at one of these proposed, but never implemented, solutions, the Avon Metro. The work seeks to answer several key questions from studying the Avon Metro about changing attitudes to the automobile and the changing nature of urban government through the emergence of neoliberal urbanism and its limitations between the years 1979 and 1992.

The Avon Metro was the idea of the newly elected Member of the European Parliament for the Bristol area, Richard Cottrell. In 1979, in conjunction with British Rail and architectural consultancy firm Whicheloe Macfarlane, he published plans to tie together the disparate railway infrastructure around Bristol with a new piece of underground railway running underneath the city centre. This would create a fast and efficient commuter network running from the suburbs to the city centre which the gridlocked city desperately needed.<sup>2</sup> Supporting this would be a realigned bus system to bring passengers to the stations creating a fully integrated transport network.<sup>3</sup>

---

<sup>1</sup> Laura Churchill, 'Bristol still the most congested city in the country as traffic moves at slowest speeds in years', *Bristol Post [Online]*, 17<sup>th</sup> August 2015, available at: <http://www.bristolpost.co.uk/news/motoring/bristol-still-most-congested-city-4153> accessed 1st June 2017.

<sup>2</sup> Avon Metro: Initial Study, Bristol: Whicheloe Macfarlane Partnership (1979), p. 12., Y5853374, Bristol Central Lending Library.

<sup>3</sup> Avon Metro: Initial Study, p. 10.

Between 1979 and 1986, however, Cottrell was unable to convince Avon County Council, which held statutory responsibility for transport policy in the area, to adopt his idea for a metro and develop it further.<sup>4</sup> Undeterred, in November 1986 Cottrell became the frontman for a company called Advanced Transport for Avon (ATA). Appointing himself as Chairman and Brian Tucker, from Whicheloe Macfarlane, as Managing Director. They aimed to take the ideas 'left on the shelf' by the County Council and construct the metro themselves using only private finance, offering a 'free gift to the city of Bristol' that would not seek any government subsidy or funding.<sup>5</sup> Changing the proposed mode of the metro from an underground railway to a street-running tramway, ATA aimed to submit three private bills to Parliament to obtain powers to compulsory purchase land and construct the system. In doing so it became the first private company to submit bills for passenger railway construction since the grouping of railway companies in the 1920s. The company therefore, embraced the changing political and economic landscape of the 1980s which championed private enterprise and sought to reduce the powers of local government by constructing a public transportation system that was outside of the control of the local authorities.

The company was successful in gaining royal assent for the first bill, which authorised the first stage of the system in 1989 but in 1992 the company was declared bankrupt without construction having been started. This left the city of Bristol without its metro system. This research seeks to explore the Avon Metro concept through the fourteen years of its existence to answer three key questions.

---

<sup>4</sup> Avon County Council, Minutes of the Planning and Highways Committee of Avon County Council, 21<sup>st</sup> November 1979, p. 1472-1473, ACC/M/PH/26 Bristol Archives.

<sup>5</sup> Michael Lord, '£350m Metro is back in town', *Evening Post*, 10<sup>th</sup> November 1986, p. 3.; Richard Cottrell, 'We must not turn our backs on the future', *Evening Post*, 23<sup>rd</sup> November 1987, p. 6-7.; 'Is this a free gift to the people?', *Evening Post*, 24<sup>th</sup> November 1987, p. 5.

## Research Questions

The first research question is 'how did the Avon Metro reflect the changing environment of governance in the city from 1979 to 1992?' The work will examine the structure of governance for a city situated within a non-metropolitan county and explore the problems this caused for transport governance. It will explore attempts to solve these problems which eventually became embodied with the Avon Metro proposals. This presented an alternative framework for transport governance which eventually took on neoliberal principles in its design. The work will examine how urban governance developed in reaction to this through the objectives of different stakeholders both locally and nationally.

The second research question asks what does the development of the metro show about the changing nature of the city due to the emergence of neoliberalism and the limitations of this agenda in the period 1979 – 1992? The work examines how the metro reflected the changing economic climate of the city in these years from originally envisioned as a tool to help the city develop following deindustrialisation to becoming an expression of neoliberalism that reflected the changing economic landscape of the 1980s and early 1990s. The work will explore why the ATA project was so radical and why there was such voracious opposition to it before its ideas started to become embraced by 1992 just before the companies collapse. The work will explore the model of neoliberal regeneration put forward by the company to identify the limitations of this model.

The last research question this research seeks to answer is 'in what way did the Avon Metro show a shifting attitude towards mobility and the automobile between the years 1979 and 1992?' The work will examine the changing focus of metro systems in the United Kingdom from use primarily as a tool to improve mobility for those without a car towards becoming primarily an aid for cutting road congestion. It will examine the reasons why modern mass-transit systems were first implemented as underground systems before later systems being built as street-running tramways during the 1980s. Then exploring how mass-transit concepts continued to evolve after this and the Avon Metro's role in all these changes. It will also examine how, despite a growing recognition of the need to restrain the impact of the car, alternatives were often forced to compete over scant resources. The work examines the Avon Metro's role in these changing attitudes locally and nationally to appraise the importance of this proposed system and some of the unexpected outcomes of its failure.

## Literature Review

Firstly, for this research it is important to consider mobility and the automobile. Urry has identified the importance of mobility, from increasing social capital amongst individuals, to its effect on GDP and its importance in enabling access to services and facilities. Urry makes a strong connection between public spending on mobility, GDP per capita, individual income per person and mobility rights and access.<sup>6</sup> The ability to move and *who* can move has great ramifications for wealth, social status and position. A key focus of Urry's work is the concept of automobility with the car becoming entrenched in everyday life creating a 'car culture', providing status and becoming predominant to the point where it sub-ordinates other 'public' mobilities possessing power far beyond being just another mode of transport.<sup>7</sup>

Gunn has examined the rise of the automobile in the post-war period, identifying that easier access to credit, development of overspill housing developments and the newfound freedom the car represented as the key reasons for the rise of popular mass ownership of the automobile.<sup>8</sup> Pooley additionally attributed the rise of the car to the decline of Public Transport in this period.<sup>9</sup> Attempts to rationalise dealing with the growing impact of the motorcar led to the publication of Buchanan's '*Traffic in Towns*' in 1963 which marked a watershed moment in how the motorcar was perceived. Buchanan focused on how urban centres could accommodate the increasing amount of traffic effectively and the changes required to achieve this. Despite cities such as Leeds, Newcastle and Glasgow starting to radically redesign their city centre layouts,

---

<sup>6</sup> John Urry, *Mobilities*, (Cambridge: Polity Press, 2007) pp.191-192, 200, 205, 207.

<sup>7</sup> Urry (2007), pp115 - 116, 133.; John Urry, 'Inhabiting the car', *Sociological Review*, 54-1 (2006), 18.

<sup>8</sup> Simon Gunn, 'People and the Car: The expansion of Automobility in Urban Britain c.1955 – 70', *Social History* 38-2 (2013), 228 & 232.

<sup>9</sup> Colin Pooley, 'Landscapes without the Car: A Counterfactual Historical Geography of Twentieth Century Britain', *Journal of Historical Geography*, 36-3 (2010), 270.

as well as central government policy following a 'predict and provide' model of road building to cater for the car, high levels of congestion continued to build within the urban centre in the following decades.<sup>10</sup> This showed an inability to deal effectively with the unrestricted growth of the automobile in the urban centre. The impact of unrestricted car growth can be seen through the work of Pooley, Turnbull and Adams, who have examined the rise in the use of the motorcar for journeys to school between 1975 and 2001 identifying the decline of walking and cycling as a mode of travel, whilst a similar study by Pooley and Turnbull has identified similar results around the journey to work.<sup>11</sup> These studies validate Urry's argument about the car subordinating all other forms of 'public' mobilities.

Such was the durability of Buchanan's ideas, '*Traffic in Towns*' has become the key report on the relationship between the automobile and urban planning. Gunn identified the long-term impact of '*Traffic in Towns*' was that it started to turn public opinion against the motorcar due to its impact on cities, as displayed by the development of anti-urban motorway movements in Leeds and Leicester. Urry expands on this theme, arguing that the realisation of urban pollution and energy use in car production and use meant that the automobile started to become a political concern from the mid-1970s.<sup>12</sup> Following '*Traffic in Towns*', there were increased attempts to minimise the impact of the car on the city or design it out altogether. Ortolano has explored one case in his study of one early design for Milton Keynes,

---

<sup>10</sup> Colin Buchanan, *Traffic in Towns* (London: Penguin, 1963), p. 38.; Simon Gunn, 'The Buchanan Report, Environment and the Problem of Traffic in 1960s Britain', *Twentieth Century British History*, 22-4 (2011), 538, 541.; Susan Owens, 'From 'predict and provide' to 'predict and prevent'?: Pricing and Planning in Transport Policy', *Transport Policy*, 2-1 (1995), 44.

<sup>11</sup> Colin G Pooley, Jean Turnbull and Mags Adams, 'The journey to school in Britain since the 1940s: continuity and change', *Area*, 37 (2005), 44.; Colin G Pooley and Jean Turnbull, 'The Journey to work: a century of change', *Area*, 31-3 (1999), 288.

<sup>12</sup> Urry (2007), p130.

which included an extensive monorail system replacing the need for the car.<sup>13</sup> Yet, for most cities, alternatives to the automobile centred around improving existing bus and rail provision which Cullinane has indicated became the most popular way to deal with congestion after years of neglect.<sup>14</sup> The largest cities received powers to improve public transport through the Transport Act (1968) allowing them to co-ordinate different forms of public transportation through the creation of Passenger Transport Executives (PTEs). These powers were enhanced by the Local Government Act (1972) when their boundaries were linked to the new metropolitan counties. Beatty and Haywood identified that the creation of the PTEs was due to a realisation, following '*Traffic in Towns*', that greater coordination of public transport was needed.<sup>15</sup> The metropolitan counties started to develop metro systems - firstly using light rail, with an underground section through the urban centre, as seen in the Tyne and Wear Metro opened in 1980, and later by street-running tramways, as seen in Manchester and Sheffield. Knowles and Ferbrache have identified that metro systems help to regenerate central business districts, boost employment, land and property prices and improve the quality of the city environment.<sup>16</sup> This change in emphasis from underground railway to tramway systems followed the deregulation of the bus industry in 1986 which Beatty and Haywood identified were pursued as they still allowed direct surface city-centre access via a mode of transport still under the control of the PTEs, rail.<sup>17</sup>

---

<sup>13</sup> Guy Ortolano, 'Planning the urban future in 1960s Britain', *The Historical Journal*, 54-2 (2011), 478.

<sup>14</sup> Sharon Cullinane, 'Attitudes towards the car in the UK: Some implications for policies on congestion and the environment', *Transport Research Part A: Policy and Practice*, 26-4 (1992), 299.

<sup>15</sup> Christina Beatty and Russell Haywood, 'Changes in travel behaviour in the English Passenger Transport Executives' areas 1981 – 1991', *Journal of Transport Geography*, 5-1 (1997), 61 & 63.

<sup>16</sup> R.D. Knowles and Fiona Ferbrache, 'Evaluation of wider economic impacts of light rail investments on cities', *Journal of Transport Geography*, 54 (2016), 430.

<sup>17</sup> Beatty and Haywood, (1997), 63-64.



Another form of transport that began to re-emerge during this period was the bicycle. Aldred has identified that the bicycle remained invisible and unprotected within transport policy during the 1980s.<sup>18</sup> Yet, professional cycling advocacy had started to emerge, which Parsons and Vigar identified was due to the need to resist automobile modernism.<sup>19</sup> One example of the success of this advocacy during this period was the construction of the Bristol to Bath Railway Path, a segregated pedestrian and cycle route along a disused railway line between the two cities, by the local cycling advocacy group 'Cyclebag'.<sup>20</sup> There was also a greater understanding into the early 1990s, argued by Owens, of the problems unchecked proliferation of the automobile had caused on the environment with this hegemony being challenged for the first time.<sup>21</sup> This process has continued towards the present day where it has been argued that the dominance of the car is becoming challenged even further with 'multi-modal' travel styles, the 'de-privatisation' of car travel and a shifting priority by central and local governments towards other transport modes with debate as to whether 'peak car' has been reached.<sup>22</sup> This research explores the development of changing ideas around transport policy between 1979 and 1992 to identify the role of the Avon Metro in this shifting attitude towards the automobile.

---

<sup>18</sup> Rachel Aldred, 'Governing transport from welfare state to hollow state: The case of cycling in the UK', *Transport Policy*, 23 (2012), 98.

<sup>19</sup> Rorie Parsons and Geoff Vigar, 'Resistance was futile! Cycling's discourses of resistance to UK automobile modernism 1950-1970', *Planning Perspectives*, (2017), 2.

<sup>20</sup> Richard Tibenham, 'Sustrans: The National Cycle Network', *Local Economy: The Journal of Local Economy Policy Unit*, 16-3 (2001), 252.

<sup>21</sup> Owens, (1995), 48.

<sup>22</sup> Judith Green, Rebecca Steinbach, Emma Garnet, Nicola Christie and Lindsay Prior, 'automobility reconfigured? Ironic seductions and mundane freedoms in 16-21-year olds' accounts of car driving and ownership', *Mobilities* (2017), 1-3.

Next, it is important to consider the development of structural governance in the city. The creation of the metropolitan counties were the culmination of local government reforms in the 1960s and 1970s that John has argued transformed local government from a complex patchwork of authorities that extended back to 1884 and 1894 to the large professional counties of today.<sup>23</sup> Heywood identified that the creation of the PTEs and the metropolitan counties gave the right structure for effective land use transport planning integration at conurbation level with effective integration between bus and rail services.<sup>24</sup> Barbara Castle, Minister of State for Transport when these reforms were introduced, reflected 25 years after their introduction that they were the right tools to implement effective integration, co-ordination and rationalisation of local transport policy.<sup>25</sup> The city of Bristol, however, did not receive this structure instead being subsumed into the non-metropolitan county of Avon. This contained the cities of Bristol and Bath as well as the large surrounding rural areas. Hagman criticised this form of settlement stating that 'development plans would have to conform to a policy plan prepared by a bunch of rural country bumpkins who knew about greenbelts and cows, but were not much practiced in new-sophisticated planning'.<sup>26</sup> Bristol, therefore, lacked the correct type of governmental structure to meet its needs, but there is lacking in the historiography any in-depth study of the problems this caused for transport governance and financing in the non-metropolitan counties.

---

<sup>23</sup> Peter John, 'The Great Survivor: The Persistence and Resilience of English Local Government', *Local Government Studies*, 40-5 (2014), 692-693.

<sup>24</sup> Russell Haywood, 'Mind the gap: Town Planning and Manchester's local railway network: 1947-1996', *European Planning Studies*, 6-2 (1998), 195.

<sup>25</sup> Baroness Castle, '25 years of the passenger transport authorities and executives', *Passenger Transport Executive Group*, p. 1. [online], available at: [www.urbantransportgroup.org/system/files/general-docs/25YearsofPTEs.pdf](http://www.urbantransportgroup.org/system/files/general-docs/25YearsofPTEs.pdf) accessed 25th June 2017.

<sup>26</sup> Donald G Hagman, 'English Planning and Environmental Law and Administration: The 1970s', *Journal of the American Planning Association* 46-2 (1980), 167.; R.D. Knowles, 'Transport impacts of Greater Manchester's Metrolink light rail system', *Journal of Transport Geography*, 4-1 (1996), 3.; Iain Docherty, 'Rail transport policy-making in UK Passenger Transport Authority Areas', *Journal of Transport Geography*, 8 (2000), 158.; Beatty and Haywood, (1997), 63-64.; Haywood, (1998), 195.

Local government underwent further change in the 1980s. John argued that central government intervention in local governance began during the financial crises of the 1970s.<sup>27</sup> Whilst Hill pinpointed that these began a process of controls being imposed by central government on public expenditure and local authority spending.<sup>28</sup> The changes introduced by the Thatcher government would have a large effect on local governance as central government sought to reduce the power and influence of elected local authorities by transferring many of their functions to single-purpose agencies as seen in the Urban Development Corporations (UDCs).<sup>29</sup> This was done partially to enhance central government control, particularly over the Labour-led metropolitan counties, abolished along with the Greater London Council (GLC) in 1985, with Chandler arguing that Thatcher believed that local governments should be the agents of central government.<sup>30</sup> As such, local government should follow the governments neoliberal reforms and encouragement of the private sector to step-in where the frontiers of the state were being rolled back. John argues that conflict occurred due to the radicalisation of local council policies in reaction to these radical central government policies.<sup>31</sup> Haughton and While argue that by the 1990s the structures of local governance had been radically altered, whilst Leach and Game identify that the key events in this were the abolition of the metropolitan councils and the GLC in 1985 and the setting up of the UDCs which both reduced the role of local government whilst centralising state control.<sup>32</sup> John, however, argues against this

---

<sup>27</sup> John, (2014), 693.

<sup>28</sup> Dilys M. Hill, Values and Judgments: The Case of Planning in England since 1947', *International Political Science Review* 1-2 (1980), 157.

<sup>29</sup> Huw Thomas and Rob Imrie, 'Urban Development Corporations and Local Governance in the UK', *Journal of Economic and Social Geography*, 88-1 (1997), 54-55.

<sup>30</sup> J.A. Chandler, *Explaining local government*, Manchester University Press: Manchester (2007), p. 243.

<sup>31</sup> John, (2014), 693-694.

<sup>32</sup> Graham Haughton and Aiden While, 'From Corporate City to Citizens City? – Urban Leadership after Local Entrepreneurialism in the United Kingdom', *Urban Affairs Review*, 35-1 (1999), 7.; Steve Leach and Chris Game, 'English Metropolitan Government since abolition: An evaluation of the abolition of the English Metropolitan

stating that at the end of the decade local government had broadly the same levels of finance and were often at the centre of new networks created by government reform.<sup>33</sup> This research will seek to contextualise this process of change within a non-metropolitan county to explore how these changes were further complicated by multiple tiers of governance. In addition to this, the research will examine how neoliberal reforms were positioned as the answer to problems of governance and finance to help provide a more effective transport policy in a non-metropolitan county during this period.

It is also important to consider the emergence of neoliberalism, urban neoliberalism and its limitations. Neoliberal ideas emerged in the late 1940s as a backlash against prevailing collectivist ideologies through the formation of the Mont Pelerin Society before being fostered in Britain throughout the 1950s and 1960s by the One Nation Group and Bow Group in the Conservative Party, then by the Institute of Economic Affairs and the Centre for Policy Studies.<sup>34</sup> The collapse of the Bretton Woods international monetary system, industrial decline, stagflation and the oil shock of 1973 have all been identified by Jones as reasons for politicians looking for an alternative policy agenda. Of which the likes of Hayek, von Mises, Friedman, Stigler and James Buchanan espoused and what would become known as neoliberalism. From the mid-1970s, he argues, neoliberal insights into macroeconomic management and regulation began to seep into policies in both Great Britain and the United States before being transformed into electorally successful programs under Thatcher and

---

County Councils', *Public Administration*, 69-2 (1991) 141-170.; Iain Deas, Brian Robson and Michael Bradford, 'Re-thinking the Urban Development Corporation 'experiment': the case of Central Manchester, Leeds and Bristol', *Progress in Planning*, 54 (2000) 1-72.; Mark Sandford, 'Public Services and Local Government: The end of the Principle of 'funding following duties'', *Local Government Studies*, 42-4 (2016), 648 – 649.

<sup>33</sup> John, (2014), 693-694.

<sup>34</sup> Rachel Turner, *Neo-Liberal Ideology: History, Concepts and Policies*, (Edinburgh Scholarship Online: Edinburgh, 2012), p.48, 92 - 98

Reagan from 1979 and 1980.<sup>35</sup> Turner explains that whilst neoliberals differ amongst themselves on the details, all neoliberals support four generic principles or beliefs: firstly, the importance of the market as the essential component for efficiently allocating resources and safeguarding individual freedom, secondly, the commitment to a Rechtsstaat (rule of law state) whereby the state's function is to secure social cohesion and stability through the preservation of individual liberties, thirdly, the advocacy of a strong but minimal state that intervenes only where necessary to secure law and order and safeguard the market order, and fourth, the dominant principle of full private ownership of the means of production.<sup>36</sup> Davis and Walsh argue that Neoliberalism emerged both as a political project, enacted through state institutions and as a broader set of ideas and values such as individualism, laissez faire economics and free choice.<sup>37</sup> Peck and Tickell argue that the 1980s and early 1990s was a period of 'roll-back' neoliberalism, defined as a period of institutional searching and experimentation within restrictive and ultimately destructive parameters before a second period of 'roll-out' neoliberalism characterised by the third-way ideas of the Clinton and Blair administrations whereby the failings of Thatcher and Reagan's ideas around neoliberalism were responded to.<sup>38</sup>

Despite becoming the predominant political and economic ideology of our time, Peck argues that it is wrong to reduce neoliberalism to some singular essence. Arguing that it has been formed by, and reacted to, the conditions within which it has been adopted; existing only in an impure form, or what he terms, messy hybrids.<sup>39</sup>

---

<sup>35</sup> Daniel Stedman Jones, *Masters of the Universe: Hayek, Friedman, and the Birth of Neoliberal Politics*, (Princeton University Press: New Jersey), 1-2, 5-6.

<sup>36</sup> Turner, (2012), p. 5-6.

<sup>37</sup> Aeron Davis and Catherine Walsh, 'Distinguishing Financialisation from Neoliberalism', *Theory, Culture and Society*, 34, (2017), 29.

<sup>38</sup> Jaime Peck and Adam Tickell, 'Neoliberalizing Space', *Antipode*, 34, (2002), 385-390.

<sup>39</sup> Jamie Peck, *Constructions of Neoliberal Reason*, (Oxford University Press: Oxford, 2010), p.8-9.

Harvey meanwhile deposits that neoliberalisation can be interpreted as either a utopian project to realise a theoretical design for the reorganisation of international capitalism or as a political project to re-establish the conditions for capital accumulation and to restore the power of economic elites, who had been constrained by the Keynesian settlement and agreement with the labour force. He argues that whilst it is the former which is often presented as justification for the implementation of neoliberalisation policies, it has not been effective in revitalising global capital accumulation but has succeeded in restoring, or creating, in the cases of Russian oligarchs, the power of an economic elite.<sup>40</sup> Brenner and Theodore argue that neoliberalism is a process, does not exist in a pure state, hinges on the active mobilisation of state power, generates path-dependent outcomes (as in it relies on what has gone previously), is contested, exacerbates regulatory failure and continues to evolve.<sup>41</sup>

This research seeks to test some of these statements by providing a contextualised example of experimentation with neoliberalism in the city of Bristol in the 1980s and 1990s and its destructive potential on the governmental models. The research will explore a unique hybrid of neoliberalism which was created in the city as the project sought to adapt to the local conditions and examine whether the metro was a utopian or political project. The research will examine how the Avon Metro relied on what had gone previously in its conception and examine the contested nature of the project and how it exacerbated regulatory failure both nationally and locally.

---

<sup>40</sup> David Harvey, *A Brief History of Neoliberalism*, (Oxford University Press: Oxford, 2005), p.14 – 19.

<sup>41</sup> Neil Brenner and Nik Theodore, 'Neoliberalism and the urban condition', *City*, 9-1 (2005), 102-103.

Hall argues that neoliberal concepts began to seep into urban design from the 1970s as a response to industrial decline following recessions in the 1970s and early 1980s. This resulted in urban planning being turned away from plans and regulations and towards encouraging urban growth through any means, resulting in policies such as Enterprise Zones and the Urban Development Corporations.<sup>42</sup> Geddes argues that institutions and practices of governance at a local level have been transformed by neoliberalism with destructive restructuring towards a greater emphasis on releasing productive potential, economic growth and competitiveness and shifting the balance towards capital and away from labour. This 'neoliberalisation of urban space' created new forms of local governance such as elite 'networked' forms of governance based on public-private partnerships, new 'public management strategies', privatisations and competitive contracting of municipal services.<sup>43</sup> Harvey adds that with the shift from managerialism to entrepreneurialism, and its evolving implementation, the way was open for a person of vision tenacity or skill to put a particular stamp on the nature and direction of urban entrepreneurship to shape it or for a mix personalities and institutions to put a project together.<sup>44</sup>

Wetherall argues that the enterprise zone is arguably the neoliberal city's purest policy expression and that these zones were intended by the inner-circles of the Conservative Party to act as 'laboratories' for incubating a new kind of economics and were criticised by the left-wing as acting as trojan horses for free-market

---

<sup>42</sup> Peter Hall, *Cities of Tomorrow: An Intellectual History of Urban Planning and Design Since 1880*, (Wiley Blackwell: Chichester, 2014) p.415 – 429.

<sup>43</sup> Mike Geddes, 'Neoliberalism and local governance: Radical developments in Latin America', *Urban Studies* 51-15 (2014), 3148.

<sup>44</sup> David Harvey, 'From Managerialism to Entrepreneurialism: The Transformation in Urban Governance in Late Capitalism', *Geografiska Annaler Series B Human Geography*, 71-1 (1989), 7.

deregulation.<sup>45</sup> Deas, Robson and Bradford have examined in-depth the role and effectiveness of the Urban Development Corporations arguing that they were only partially effective despite being hailed as having a transformative role in urban development. Their work argues that whilst physically the areas were transformed there were questions about the durability of these regenerations.<sup>46</sup> Whereas the historiography overwhelmingly focuses on Enterprise Zones and Urban Development Corporations as expressions of urban neoliberalism, this research looks at another contemporary, and until now unexamined attempt, to institute a neoliberal framework. If successful, this model could have been replicated elsewhere. The ATA project was, therefore, an additional 'laboratory' for a new form of economics which has been overlooked by historians. This model used both path-dependant outcomes and a different and innovative form of financing to solve the lack of infrastructure within the city. This made it to a large extent much more significant as the purest form of neoliberal policy expression than even the enterprise zones that Wetherall argues.

Lastly it is important to consider studies on the Avon Metro itself. No academic studies of the development of the Avon Metro exist despite its legacy on the history of transport in the city of Bristol. There have been smaller studies of the project however, including a short history of the project in the work 'Unbuilt Bristol' by Eugenie Byrne. Here he argues that political opposition, the economic downturn and the emergence of Badgerline's alternative Guided Light Transit system were the reasons for the schemes failure.<sup>47</sup> In addition, Oliver Green's book 'Rails in the Road', a history of Tramways in Great Britain and Ireland, also contains a short section on the project.

---

<sup>45</sup> Sam Wetherell, 'Freedom Planned: Enterprise Zones and Urban Non-Planning in Post-War Britain', *Twentieth Century British History* 27-2 (2016), 266, 278-280.

<sup>46</sup> Iain Deas, Brian Robson & Michael Bradford, 'Re-thinking the Urban Development Corporation 'experiment': the case of Central Manchester, Leeds and Bristol', *Progress in Planning* 54 (2000), 1-2, 61-70.

<sup>47</sup> Eugenie Byrne, *Unbuilt Bristol: 1750 – 2050*, (Redcliffe Press: Bristol, 2013), p. 94 – 97.



He cites growing opposition and the economic downturn as being the reasons for the schemes failure.<sup>48</sup> There have also been occasional retrospectives by the local newspaper, the Bristol Post.<sup>49</sup> Yet, no work has looked at the reasons why the scheme was proposed in the first place or at the project in any depth. No work at all has examined events prior to the announcement of ATA in 1986. No work has linked the Avon Metro proposals to a wider conceptual framework of neoliberalism, its contribution to the changing nature of local governance or attitudes towards the automobile in the urban centre which this work does.

### Contribution to knowledge

This thesis argues that Advanced Transport for Avon represented the neoliberal city's purest policy expression and not the enterprise zone as argued by Wetherall.<sup>50</sup> Advanced Transport for Avon represented an alternative model for the implementation of urban neoliberalism which, if it had succeeded, would have provided a market based approach to urban regeneration and minimalised the role of the state to allowing private finance to lead regeneration and transport infrastructure within the city. Whilst other studies have explored the emergence of the neoliberal agenda and its impact on urban theory, these have focused on central government policies of enterprise zones and urban development corporations.<sup>51</sup>

---

<sup>48</sup> Oliver Green, *Rails in the Road: A History of Tramways in Great Britain and Ireland*, (Pen and Sword: Barnsley, 2016), p. 220 – 221.

<sup>49</sup> Esme Ashcroft and Joseph Wilkes, 'Why Bristol doesn't have trams', Bristol Post, 4<sup>th</sup> November 2017, [online] available at: <http://www.bristolpost.co.uk/news/history/why-bristol-doesnt-have-trams-724497> accessed 20<sup>th</sup> December 2017.

<sup>50</sup> Wetherell, (2016), 266.

<sup>51</sup> Harvey, (1989), Hall, (2014), Wetherell (2016) & Brenner and Theodore, (2005).

This work seeks to expand the literature by providing an analysis of another contemporary neoliberal concept to these, that of Advanced Transport for Avon and regeneration through the provision of tramway infrastructure. ATA is important as it intended to replace the role of the local authorities in transport governance without any active involvement from central government like these other concepts did. This work therefore provides a different perspective on the unfolding of urban neoliberalism at this time. By analysis what happened with ATA, a new appreciation can be gained of the extent of neoliberalism and its limitations during this period. This is the overarching contribution of this work.

Using Brenner and Theodore's view of the evolutionary and path dependant nature of neoliberalism, it can be ascertained that the reasons for ATA's emergence was due to the problems in local government structure, lack of funding or the developing neoliberal economic agenda.<sup>52</sup> The Avon Metro project was a somewhat unique expression of Turner's four generic principles of neoliberalism, with private finance and the market intending to completely fund the system, a first for a modern public transport system, a strong minimal state to provide the legislative consent for the construction of the system through private acts of parliament, and by aiming to obtain the track bed from public bodies such as the City Council. As such, it deserves analysis as it represented a different potential framework for urban neoliberalism than the UDCs whilst this agenda was still evolving, aiming to privatise parts of the railway network in Bristol a decade before the privatisation of the national rail network. This adds to the scholarship by investigating an attempt at instigating neoliberal concepts that went far more than any government backed schemes at the time.

---

<sup>52</sup> Brenner and Theodore (2005), 102 – 103.

The work also seeks to make other contributions to the literature about the changing design of the city and attitudes towards the motorcar and the bicycle as transportation modes due to the metro concept in Bristol and the implications this had on national and local attitudes to both. In this sense, the work also seeks to determine the long-term legacy of the metro on a city which was dominated by the car and how this project started to open conversations in the city about how to best solve urban transportation problems.

### Source discussion and methodology

Several different source types have been used to construct this research. Local newspapers, the *Evening Post* and the *Western Daily Press*, proved invaluable in providing a day-by-day account of events as these contain opinion pieces, letters and other minor updates which are often not recorded in any official or unofficial documents. Richard Cottrell's background working for both the *Evening Post* and *HTV* before entering politics, provided him with the ability to use the media to his advantage. This resulted in most developments appearing in the local media first to stimulate discussion on the subject making this a rich source of information. Council meeting minutes from both the City and County Councils and the dedicated sub-committees set-up in 1987 to discuss the metro also proved invaluable. These provide a rich source of information, including technical reports from engineers and recommendations from parliamentary agents to understand the positions both councils took on the metro. The minutes are less important, however, for the first chapter of this work between 1979 and 1986 as Avon County Council dismissed the metro concept out of hand when first envisioned so there are no sub-committees to examine but in the second and third chapters of the work both councils set up sub-

committees after the announcement of ATA. Study pamphlets and journals have also been useful as most information about Cottrell's 1979 proposals are contained within an *Initial Study*, produced by Whicheloe Macfarlane, and an article he wrote for the journal *Modern Railways*. Later work, such as leaflets on ATAs proposals and a leaflet outlining the GLT proposals by Badgerline, have also been useful. The last major source of information has been from an interview conducted with Jack Penrose, a consultant on the ATA project, who was also involved in the Manchester Metrolink. This provides a useful viewpoint from someone working closely with the company about how events unfolded.

### Outline of structure

This research is divided into three chapters. The first looks at how, in the context of the 1979 oil crisis and increasing congestion on the roads, Richard Cottrell announced plans for an underground railway line under the city to create a more effective transport system. These proposals were designed to open debate on transport policy in the Avon region with the hope that the County Council would adopt the project as transport policy. The chapter examines the reasons why the council refused to adopt the project and how the metro proposals suggested ways to fix the broken structure of transport governance in the region. This chapter also examines how the Avon Metro project started to change perceptions of how congestion could be tackled in the urban centre.

The second chapter examines how, in the context of the Thatcher governments neoliberal reforms, a company called Advanced Transport for Avon (ATA) pledged to use private finance to build the Avon Metro itself. This company, led by Cottrell,

attempted to recraft transport governance in the region by not relying on the structures of local government to adopt and construct the metro. Instead, private bills would be pursued in Parliament, eliminating the role the local authorities had in transport governance over the project. The chapter will explore how this recrafting played out between 1986 and 1989 and the challenges and opposition it faced. The chapter also explores how and why the project changed mode from an underground railway line to a street-running tram system and look at the problems this change caused the project.

The third chapter explores the eventual acceptance of ATA's recrafting of transport governance along neoliberal lines and why those who opposed the project lifted their concerns over its governance. It will examine new reasons for opposition to the metro, particularly in areas where different forms of mobility came into conflict along the proposed use of the Bristol to Bath Railway Path. The chapter identifies why, despite the acceptance of its methods by the tiers of government in the region, the project collapsed and whether this was due to the economic downturn, the inability of central government to support the project or due to other companies offering similar results at a lower price to identify why this form of neoliberalism failed.

## Chapter One

### Attempting to work within the structure of transport governance: The Avon Metro, 1979 – 1986.

Richard Cottrell began calls for an 'Avon Metro' in regional newspapers the *Evening Post* and the *Western Daily Press* from July 1979, shortly following his election as South West of England Member of the European Parliament (MEP). Working with architectural consultancy firm, Whicheloe Macfarlane, he published an *Initial Study for an Avon Metro* in the November. In this he argued that a metro would solve Bristol's chronic traffic problems, conserve oil and help regenerate the city.<sup>53</sup> The study identified that both defunct and active railway lines around the city could be tied together with a short piece of new underground railway, connecting Clifton Down Station and Laurence Hill, shown in figure 1. By building simple new underground stations along this route a fast and efficient metro system could be created than ran from the suburbs directly into the heart of the city, as shown in figure 2. Providing car parking at the stations as well as a realigned bus network to bring passengers to their nearest station people would be encouraged not to drive into the city. A through ticketing system would also make modal transfer easier.<sup>54</sup> The study urged Avon County Council, which held statutory responsibility for public transport in the city, to fund a feasibility study to look at the proposals further.<sup>55</sup>

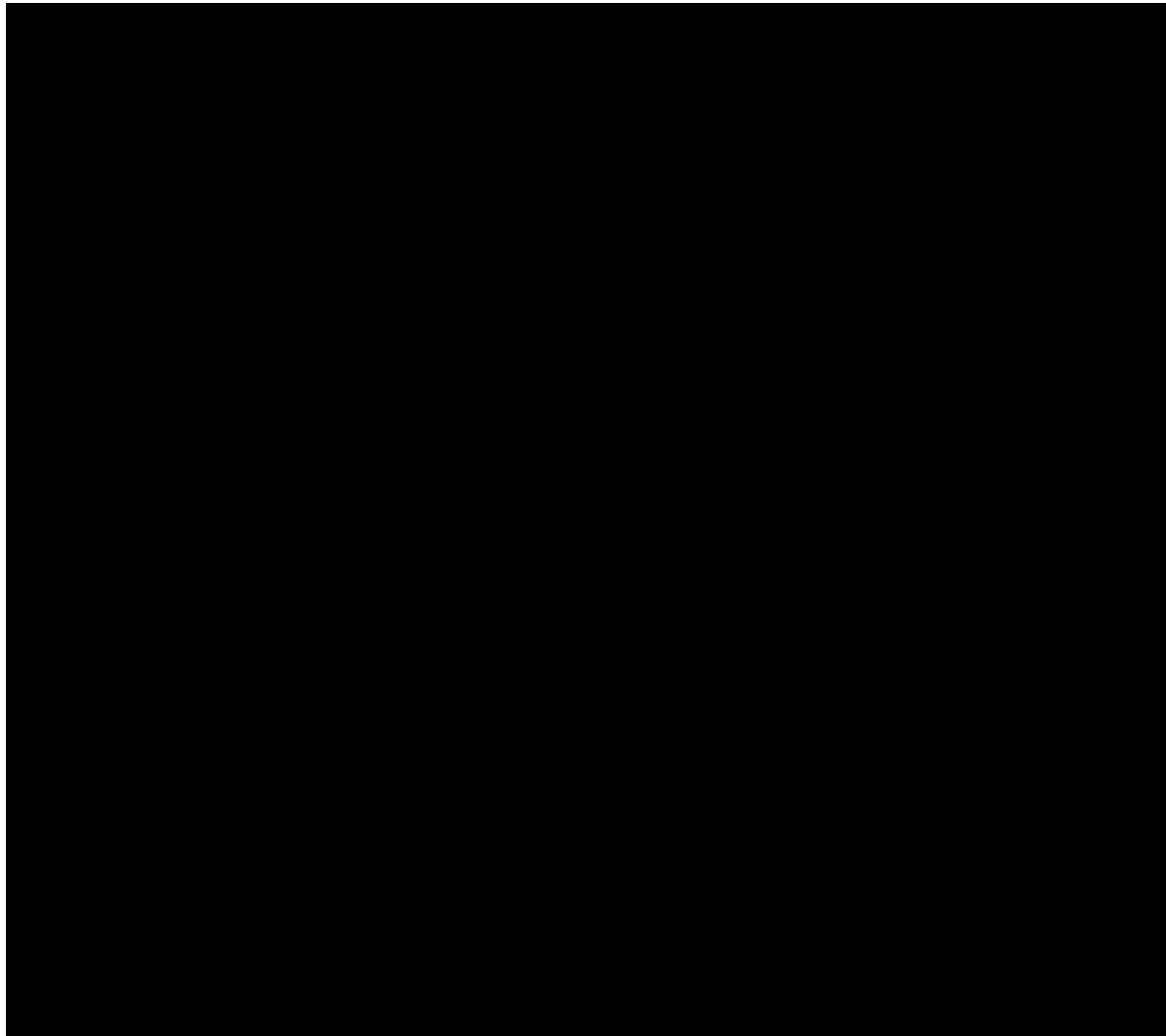
---

<sup>53</sup> Richard Cottrell, 'All Aboard for the Avon Metro?', *Evening Post*, 18<sup>th</sup> August 1979, p. 2.; Richard Cottrell, 'Look to Metro as '1990 oil crisis' is with us now', *Evening Post*, 26<sup>th</sup> November 1979, p. 28.; Richard Cottrell, 'A Metro for Avon?', *Modern Railways*, January 1980, 18.

<sup>54</sup> *Avon Metro: Initial Study*, (1979), p. 6-8.

<sup>55</sup> *Avon Metro: Initial Study*, (1979), p. 15.

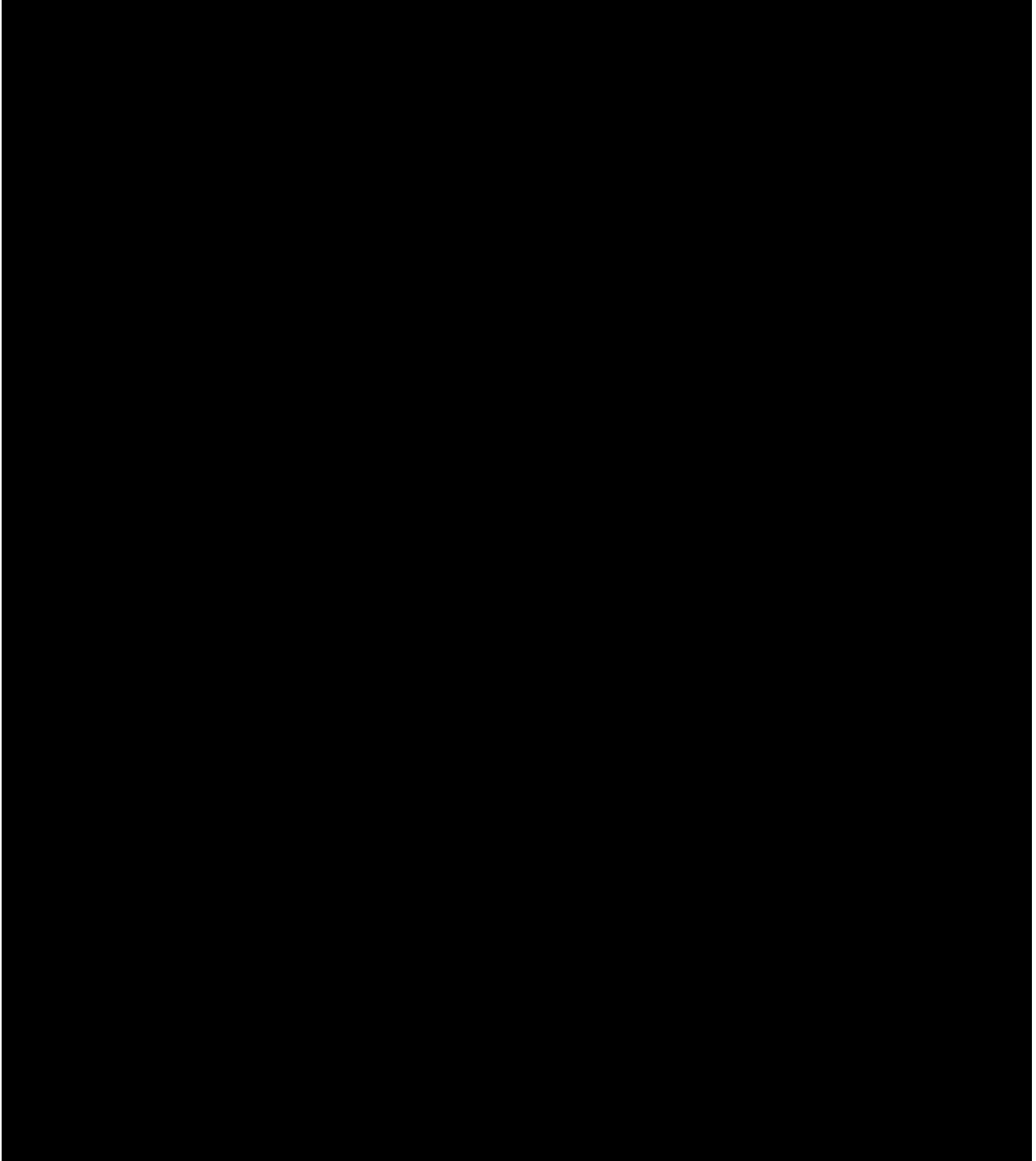
*Figure. 1. Route of proposed underground tunnel from Clifton Down Station to Lawrence Hill with locations for proposed new stations.<sup>56</sup>*



---

<sup>56</sup> *Avon Metro: Initial Study* (1979), p. 11.

*Figure. 2. Artist's impression of an Avon Metro underground station.<sup>57</sup>*



---

<sup>57</sup> *Avon Metro: Initial Study*, (1979), p. 10.



Despite seeing merits in the proposals, the County Council declined to adopt the project as policy. It argued that the cost of a feasibility study could not be justified without any idea of where the estimated £300million required to construct the system would come from.<sup>58</sup> Undeterred, Cottrell continued to promote *his* idea of a metro between 1979 and 1986 highlighting how it could be achieved at a lower cost.<sup>59</sup> By 1986, frustrated by the continued refusal of the council to adopt the project, Cottrell started to explore how the metro could be built by private finance alone at no cost to ratepayers and without the need for the council to adopt the idea.<sup>60</sup>

This chapter explores how the Avon Metro was first presented as a solution to the problem of the automobile in the urban centre, beginning a debate on transport within the city of Bristol. It also examines the structural problems in the non-metropolitan County of Avon that prevented the Council from adopting the metro concept. It also explores how the *Initial Study* suggested ways that the County Council could raise the required funding for a metro within these constraints and how the metro eventually came to be influenced by the emergence of neoliberal ideas by 1986. This would eventually result in a private company being formed to build the metro outside of the County Council's control.

---

<sup>58</sup> Jim Webber, 'The £8 million Axe', *Evening Post*, 26<sup>th</sup> July 1979, p. 4.; 'Metro? Cash is problem' *Evening Post*, 22<sup>nd</sup> November 1979, p. 6.

<sup>59</sup> Julie Hendry, 'Avon rail Metro scheme lined up', *Evening Post*, 5<sup>th</sup> January 1984, p. 5.; 'Extend West Rail Link', *Evening Post*, 1<sup>st</sup> March 1984, p. 10.; Julie Hendry, 'Move to extend Ghost Train', *Evening Post*, 26<sup>th</sup> March 1984, p. 5.; 'Metro needs rating change', *Evening Post*, 6<sup>th</sup> April 1982, p. 12.; David Harrison, 'Private line to success by Euro MP', *Evening Post*, 9<sup>th</sup> October 1982, p. 2.

<sup>60</sup> "Trams 'would save shops'", *Evening Post*, 23<sup>rd</sup> May 1986, p. 75.

*The Avon Metro and the shifting attitude towards mobility and the automobile 1979 - 1986*

The first 'modern' metro systems in the UK, the Tyne and Wear Metro (1980), Merseyrail, (1977) and the Argyll Line in Glasgow (1979), were not designed to deal with the problem of road-based congestion in urban centres but to increase mobility for those without a car. Howard and Layfield's study of the Tyne and Wear Metro argues that that system's key aim was to allow greater employment opportunities for those without a car by providing greater transport to developing city districts following deindustrialisation. Docherty argues a similar case in both Merseyside and Glasgow where metros were constructed in areas where car ownership was historically low.<sup>61</sup> This was due to the Transport Act (1968) consolidating a need to maintain transport planning for the 'car-less' in society.<sup>62</sup> Later metro schemes, by contrast, in Manchester, Sheffield and the Midlands, all held as a primary aim cutting urban traffic congestion in addition to improving mobility.<sup>63</sup> This section argues that the Avon Metro proposals of 1979 was instrumental in pioneering this change as it was the first metro system proposed that had cutting congestion and reducing reliance on the automobile as its core aim.

The Avon Metro proposals took the Tyne and Wear metro as its basic blueprint, with Cottrell writing that 'Newcastle is the example we should copy'.<sup>64</sup> There was, however, one major difference between the two cities. Car ownership levels in Tyne

---

<sup>61</sup> D.F. Howard & P. Layfield, 'Tyne and Wear Metro: Concept, organisation and operation', *Proceedings of the Institution of Civil Engineers*, 70 (1981), 651-652.; Docherty, (2000), 161.

<sup>62</sup> Parsons & Vigar, (2017), 2.

<sup>63</sup> Knowles (1996), 1.; J.H.M. Russell and R.J Horton, 'Planning of the South Yorkshire Supertam', *Proceedings of the Institution of Civil Engineers - Transport*, 111 (1995), 15.; Paul Griffiths, Peter Adams and Ann Cheung, 'Midland Metro expansion, UK', *Proceedings of the Institution of Civil Engineers – Transport*, 167 (2014), 137.

<sup>64</sup> Richard Cottrell, 'All Aboard for the Avon Metro?', *Evening Post*, 18<sup>th</sup> August 1979, p. 2.

and Wear were low compared to the higher than average rates in Avon.<sup>65</sup> Bristol had long suffered from traffic problems resulting in a long line of failed projects in the region to improve traffic flow. One proposal - to construct 'pavements in the sky' to segregate traffic and pedestrian in the city centre, had only been partially implemented. Whilst another - the construction of an inner ring-road had been cancelled shortly after half of the inner-city suburb of Totterdown had been flattened to make way for a new junction leaving distaste and controversy in the city over such projects.<sup>66</sup> On outlining his metro proposals, Cottrell argued the city was facing 'impending cardiac failure due to the clogging of its transport arteries' and that building more roads was not the solution.<sup>67</sup> He also argued that feeder routes into the city were unsuitable for the construction of bus lanes and this left rail improvement as the only option.<sup>68</sup>

Providing further impetus was the ongoing global oil crisis of 1979. Cottrell argued that 'the days of cheap energy are over and only systems such as his proposal could provide fast, efficient and economic urban transport'.<sup>69</sup> The Avon Metro was the first system proposed following the oil crisis which had led people to question the stability of the car system for the first time.<sup>70</sup> Therefore, the Avon Metro proposals were the first to react to this uncertain future. Cottrell's study argued that the city's dependence on the automobile was created by a lack of a viable alternative which had been caused by the closure of many of Bristol's suburban railway lines.<sup>71</sup> The resultant

---

<sup>65</sup> Cottrell, January 1980, 18.

<sup>66</sup> Eugene Byrne, (2013), p. 74-76, p. 80-87.

<sup>67</sup> Richard Cottrell, 'Let's go Metro! It's the way to get ahead', *Evening Post*, 7<sup>th</sup> August 1979, Avon Metro 1979 – 1989 – Collection of Newspaper Articles, p. 5., Y5795168, Bristol Central Lending Library.; Richard Cottrell, 'All Aboard for the Avon Metro?', *Evening Post*, 18<sup>th</sup> August 1979, p. 2.; Cottrell, January 1980, 18.

<sup>68</sup> *Avon Metro: Initial Study*, (1979), p. 3.

<sup>69</sup> Dave Baxter, '£1.20 a gallon - and rising', *Evening Post*, 28<sup>th</sup> June 1979, p. 1., Richard Cottrell, 'Look to Metro as '1990 oil crisis' is with us now, *Letter to the Evening Post*, 26<sup>th</sup> November 1979, p. 28.; David Harrison 'Let's go Metro says Euro MP, *Evening Post*, 22<sup>nd</sup> June 1979, p. 3.

<sup>70</sup> Gunn, (2011), 541.

<sup>71</sup> *Avon Metro: Initial Study*, (1979), p. 3.

high levels of car ownership and urban congestion then led to a huge waste of fuel from cars idling - 'consider how much vital oil is turned into useless vapour on the Centre between four and six p.m.' Cottrell argued.<sup>72</sup> The metro's justification, therefore, was specifically about conserving fuel and preventing the construction of further roads but not about improving air quality, despite an increasing understanding of the link between the automobile and air quality at the time.<sup>73</sup> The Avon Metro, therefore, sought to redesign the urban environment away from dependence on the automobile.<sup>74</sup> It would achieve this by better utilisation of existing and closed rail routes around the city and for the first time within modern British metro systems, placing cutting congestion as one of its core principles.

Fundamental features of the Avon Metro were inspired from home and abroad as to how to improve the urban environment. The Stadtbahn (S-Bahn) systems of Germany provided strong inspiration and were particular focuses for Cottrell.<sup>75</sup> This had the benefit of highlighting his role as an MEP to prove his worth to an electorate who had just voted in European elections for the first time.<sup>76</sup> German transport policies had been formed from a Federal Report published in 1964, around the time of the *Beeching Report* and *Traffic in Towns* in Britain, which led to very different approaches to transport policies between the two countries. Whilst British policy discourse had

---

<sup>72</sup> Richard Cottrell, 'Let's go metro! - It's the way to get ahead', *Evening Post*, 7<sup>th</sup> August 1979, Avon Metro 1979 - 1989 - Collection of Newspaper Articles, p. 5., Y5795168, Bristol Central Lending Library.

<sup>73</sup> *Avon Metro: Initial Study*, (1979), p. 3.; Ann Watson, Richard Bates & Donald Kennedy (eds), *Air Pollution, the Automobile, and Public Health*, (Washington D.C.: National Academies Press, 1988) p. 42.

<sup>74</sup> Mark S. Foster, 'The Automobile in the Urban Environment: Planning for an Energy-Short Future', *The Public Historian*, 3-4 (1981) 27.

<sup>75</sup> Richard Cottrell, 'Look to Metro as '1990 oil crisis' is with us now', *Letter to the Evening Post*, 26<sup>th</sup> November 1979, p. 28.; David Harrison 'Let's go Metro says Euro MP', *Evening Post*, 22<sup>nd</sup> June 1979, p. 3.; Richard Cottrell, 'Successful response to Avon's new Metro', *Letter to the Western Daily Press*, 17<sup>th</sup> July 1979, Avon Metro 1979 - 1989 - Collection of Newspaper Articles, p. 1., Y5795168, Bristol Central Lending Library.; *Avon Metro: Initial Study*, (1979), p. 1.

<sup>76</sup> Russell J. Dalton & Robert Duval, 'The Political Environment and Foreign Policy Opinions: British Attitudes towards European Integration, 1972 - 1979', *British Journal of Political Science* 16 (1986), 119.; *European Parliament election turnout 1979 - 2014*, [Online], available at: <http://www.ukpolitical.info/european-parliament-election-turnout.htm> accessed 3rd June 2017

recommended substantial investment in roads, in Germany it was concluded that Light Rapid Transit (LRT) should form the basis of dealing with the problem of the car in cities.<sup>77</sup> Cottrell argued that European neighbours had invested in excellent urban transportation systems which protected the urban environment and prevented congestion and these had become an essential part of the civic furniture.<sup>78</sup> The S-Bahn system in Munich shared many of the features of the proposed Avon Metro as both aimed to preserve the city-centre urban environment and cut congestion with a central underground tunnel to deal with a paucity of river crossings in the city.<sup>79</sup>

Influences also came from the Tyne and Wear Metro. These included the integration of local bus services and large parking facilities at outlying stations to encourage modal transfer.<sup>80</sup> These became an important part of the Avon Metro's aim to encourage all sections of society to use the metro. Car owners could park their car at the stations whilst the bus services would not follow constricted routes into the city. These would instead travel along less busy routes to the nearest metro station. Publicity photos of the Tyne and Wear Metro were also modified for the initial study highlighting this direct inspiration. The Avon Metro concept therefore took inspiration from developments at home, but also from Germany in producing the concept of what a metro system in the region could achieve.

---

<sup>77</sup> C.A. Nash, 'Policies towards suburban rail services in Britain and the Federal Republic of Germany – a comparison', *Transport Reviews*, 5-3 (1985), 269 – 270.

<sup>78</sup> 'An Initial Study for Avon Metro', *Modern Railways*, January 1980, 22.; *Avon Metro: Initial Study*, (1979), p. 1.

<sup>79</sup> C.A. Nash, (1985), 275.

<sup>80</sup> Richard Cottrell, 'All Aboard for the Avon Metro?', *Evening Post*, 18<sup>th</sup> August 1979, p. 2.; *An Initial Study for Avon Metro*, *Modern Railways*, January 1980, 20, 22.

Despite aiming to provide a comprehensive alternative to the car, the Avon Metro concept was unable to challenge the car system during this period. Between 1979 and 1986, local investment in rail remained low. Avon County Council only allocated £40,000 to renovate the main commuter rail route into the city, the Severn Beach Line, yet also proceeded with the construction of the Avon Ring Road at a cost of £43 million.<sup>81</sup> Regional rail development focused instead on how to reduce costs rather than expand services as displayed by trials for the British Leyland Railbus, a one carriage bus on rails, which had much lower running costs than a standard train.<sup>82</sup> Rail services in the region continued to be cut despite having the potential to form a useful commuter service if expanded.<sup>83</sup> Overspill developments on the city's periphery, such as the town of Yate - expanded in the 1960s only to have its station closed, also continued to have no connection to the local railway network.<sup>84</sup> One disused railway line with the potential to serve a corridor to the north east of the city, was converted into a segregated cycle and pedestrian path by a local group, Cyclebag. This highlighted a lack of desire to protect these routes for future rail development. Despite the aim of the initial study to act as a hinge for transport policy debate in the region, very little had been achieved in promoting a railway network as a viable solution to Bristol's urban congestion by 1986.<sup>85</sup>

---

<sup>81</sup> Dave Baxter, '£40,000 rail link facelift unveiled', *Evening Post*, 10<sup>th</sup> November 1982, p. 5.; Judith Pike, 'Relief as ring road route is chosen', *Evening Post*, 12<sup>th</sup> September 1983, p. 8.

<sup>82</sup> Martin Powell, 'Railbus starts on the right track', *Evening Post*, 7<sup>th</sup> October 1981, p. 1.; Martin Powell, 'New Railbus design hitch threatens to hit custom', *Evening Post*, 8<sup>th</sup> October 1981, p. 6.

<sup>83</sup> 'Keep railway halt open plea', *Evening Post*, 30<sup>th</sup> January 1984, p.4.; 'Extend West Rail Link', *Evening Post*, 1<sup>st</sup> March 1984, p.10.; Julie Hendry, 'Move to extend Ghost Train', *Evening Post*, 26<sup>th</sup> March 1984, p. 5.

<sup>84</sup> Julie Hendry, 'Council studies Scots' metro system', *Evening Post*, 22<sup>nd</sup> January 1981, p. 5.; Julie Hendry, 'Town jumps on the Metro bandwagon', *Evening Post*, 2<sup>nd</sup> February 1981, p. 6.; Avon Metro 1979 – 1989 – Collection of Newspaper Articles, Y5795168, Bristol Central Lending Library p. 42.; 'A Town says 'Yes' to the Metro plan', *Evening Post*, 8<sup>th</sup> November 1979, p. 6.

<sup>85</sup> Cottrell, January 1980, 18.

The Avon Metro, therefore, redefined the aims of metro systems in the UK. Inspiration was taken from the Tyne and Wear Metro and from S-Bahn systems merging into a concept that was designed around improving the urban environment by removing the need to drive into the urban centre and to provide a comprehensive alternative to the car in the context of an expected scarcity of future oil supplies. This principal was adopted by future metro systems in the UK such as ones in Manchester, Sheffield and the Midlands away from providing purely an egalitarian role, improving mobility for those without a car and towards tackling congestion.<sup>86</sup> The Avon Metro aimed to appeal across society to both the car owner and those without the car by providing expanded bus services to its stations as well as car parks to ease modal exchange. This was to be an important component of the proposals due to the high-levels of car ownership in the region and the lack of effective bus routes into the city. Despite these proposals not being realised, these did go on to change the approach that other cities would take with the construction of metro systems by making these more congestion-focused. This represented a key change in the thinking behind the objectives of modern urban transportation systems in the UK. The role of the Avon Metro in this change has not been identified previously.

### *The Avon Metro and governance of the city, 1979 - 1986*

Analyses of urban rail transport infrastructure projects in the United Kingdom during this period have focused on either the development of metro systems within the metropolitan counties, or on projects in London which had its own unique structure for

---

<sup>86</sup> Knowles, (1996), 1.; Russell and Horton, (1995), 15.; Griffiths, Adams and Cheung, (2014), 137.

transport development.<sup>87</sup> There has not been a comparative study on developments in non-metropolitan counties, which had a different structure of governance. This section explores structural problems in the county of Avon which resulted in the County Council being unable to support transport infrastructure projects. This left the city of Bristol at a disadvantage compared to other cities in the UK. The Avon Metro was originally conceived to work within the existing structures of governance in the region and find solutions to its flaws, yet, by 1986 this would change to attempting to implement a metro by completely evading the existing structure of governance. This section explores why this occurred.

Both the Transport Act (1968) and Local Government Act (1972) had given English city regions larger than Bristol 'the right sort of structure for effective land-use transport planning integration'.<sup>88</sup> This included the setting up of Passenger Transport Authorities (PTAs) consisting of elected representatives to direct general transport policy plans in these areas. Additionally, Passenger Transport Executives (PTEs), made up of professionals, would manage the day-to day implementation of these plans.<sup>89</sup> The metropolitan counties, therefore, were able to plan effective, integrated transport policies, directing both the local bus company (until deregulation in 1986) and British Rail in the provision of public transportation. Metropolitan County Councils were also able to apply for government grants for the construction of new infrastructure and could subsidise important local services.<sup>90</sup> Bristol, however, became the largest

---

<sup>87</sup> Howard & Layfield, (1981), 651 - 668.; J.V. Bartlett, I.F. Hartley & P. Layfield, 'Tyne and Wear Metro: Management of the Project', *Proceedings of the Institution of Civil Engineers*, 70 (1981), 669 - 693.; Haywood, (1998), 187 - 210.; Stephen Jolly and Bob Bayman, *Docklands Light Railway – Official Handbook*, (Capital Transport: Harrow Weald, 1986).

<sup>88</sup> Haywood, (1998), 195.

<sup>89</sup> Howard & Layfield, (1981), 651 - 653.; Bartlett, Hartley & Layfield, (1981), 678.; Passenger Transport Executive Group, '25 years of the passenger transport authorities and executives', *Passenger Transport Executive Group*, p. 5. [online], available at: [www.urbantransportgroup.org/system/files/general-docs/25YearsofPTEs.pdf](http://www.urbantransportgroup.org/system/files/general-docs/25YearsofPTEs.pdf) accessed 25th June 2017.

<sup>90</sup> Bartlett, Hartley & Layfield, (1981), 673.



city in England not to receive metropolitan county status and was subsumed into the non-metropolitan county of Avon instead. Avon did not have the ability to co-ordinate transport, apply for grants or subsidise services and this placed Bristol at a significant disadvantage.<sup>91</sup> This meant, the county of Avon lacked the structures of governance, strategic vision and funding to provide effective transport policies in the region. As a result, the County Council's transport budget did not meet its needs, remaining chronically underfunded and reported at only £7million for 1981.<sup>92</sup>

Further problems were caused by the creation of Avon. Bristol City Council lost many powers it had held since 1373 and other areas of the county.<sup>93</sup> As a result, Bristol City Council's leader campaigned in 1983 to retrieve powers lost to Avon eleven years prior.<sup>94</sup> In addition, other areas of the county which had historically belonged to Gloucestershire and Somerset continued an ongoing campaign to be allowed to return to their historic counties.<sup>95</sup> Governmental responsibilities in the county also became fractured, making it unclear exactly what tier of government was responsible for what policy resulting in discord over projects where local authority power overlapped. This resulted in arguments over who should deliver proposals to improve the road layout in the city.<sup>96</sup> The county's structure, with a strong urban and rural divide also resulted in stark political divides, shown in figure 3, that caused frequent shifts in power and a lack of consistency, direction and vision in policies.<sup>97</sup> These problems in governance

---

<sup>91</sup> *Transport Policy (White Paper)*, Ministry of Transport, July 1966 p. 13. [online], available at: <http://www.urbantransportgroup.org/resources/types/documents/transport-policy-white-paper-1966> accessed 14th June 2017.

<sup>92</sup> Michael Prestage, 'Avon plans to cut transport budget', *Evening Post*, 19<sup>th</sup> October 1981, p.3.

<sup>93</sup> Royal Charter of Edward III, 20<sup>th</sup> December 1373. Contained within: R.B. Mowat (ed.), *Bristol Charters Vol.1 1155 – 1373* (Bristol: Bristol Record Society, 1930), p. 171.

<sup>94</sup> Michael Prestage, 'Power battle by city', *Evening Post*, 14th September 1983, p. 1.

<sup>95</sup> Nigel Dando, 'Avon revolt by towns', *Evening Post*, 16<sup>th</sup> February 1983, p.1.; Andrew White, 'Fight to leave Avon grows', *Evening Post*, 19<sup>th</sup> February 1983, p. 3.

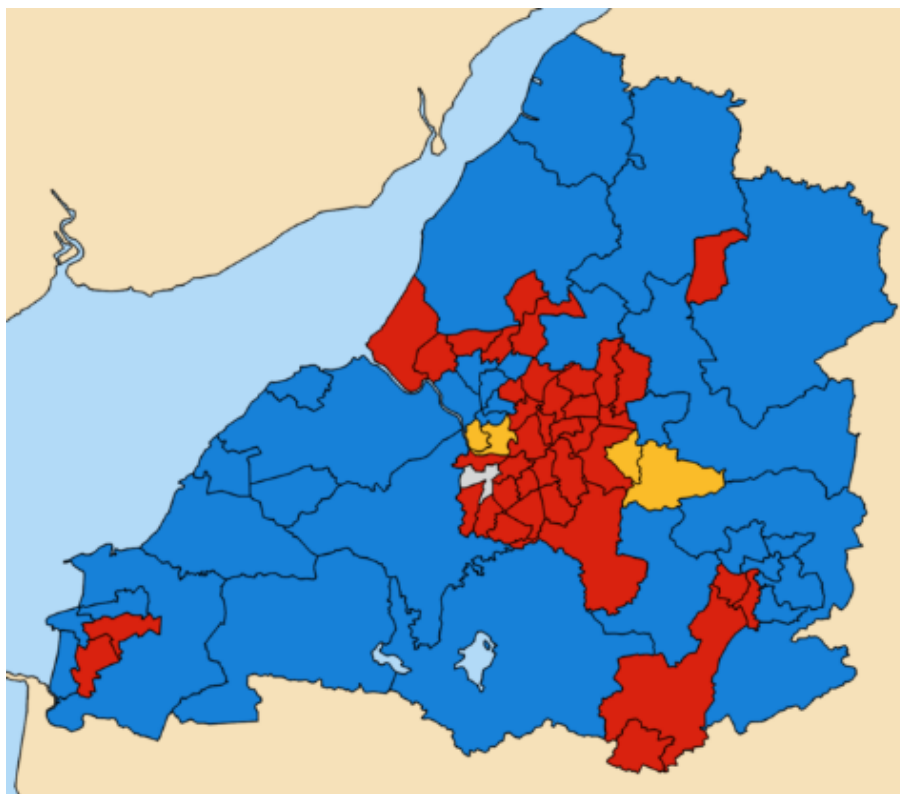
<sup>96</sup> Mike Prestage, 'Plan to remove Redcliffe traffic', *Evening Post*, 13<sup>th</sup> July 1983, p. 10.; 'St Mary road scheme rapped', *Evening Post*, 15<sup>th</sup> July 1983, p. 2.

<sup>97</sup> Martin Powell, 'Avon major policy plan thrown out by Labour', *Evening Post*, 5<sup>th</sup> June 1981, p. 2.; Mike Prestage, 'Boycott as £6m project begins', *Evening Post*, 4<sup>th</sup> May 1983, p. 1.; Mike Prestage, 'Canon's Marsh

led to one resident dubbing Bristol 'the city of white elephants' in a letter to the *Evening Post* due to the amount of proposals that collapsed amid political disagreement.<sup>98</sup> Even the leader of the County Council questioned the point of the county's existence.<sup>99</sup> Avon's creation, therefore, was problematic, resulting in a lack of an effective structure and an inability to access finance to enable it to support and implement effective transport policies.

*Figure. 3. Avon County wards in 1981 showing the strong Labour control over the environs of the city of Bristol and largely Conservative control over the surrounding environs of Avon.*<sup>100</sup>

*Key: Blue – Conservative Wards, Red – Labour Wards, Yellow – Liberal Party Wards*



---

stands idle', *Evening Post*, 5<sup>th</sup> May 1983, p. 1.; Mike Prestage, 'Marsh plan faces chop', *Evening Post*, 6<sup>th</sup> May 1983, p. 1.; Bob Corfield, 'Canon's Marsh scheme is axed', *Evening Post*, 7<sup>th</sup> June 1983, p. 1.; Mike Prestage, 'Canon's Marsh fate is sealed', *Evening Post*, 5<sup>th</sup> July 1983, p. 31.; Mike Prestage, 'Labour hits out over Canon's Marsh Plan', *Evening Post*, 30<sup>th</sup> September 1983, p. 3.

<sup>98</sup> 'City of White Elephants', *Evening Post*, 22<sup>nd</sup> August 1983, p.30.

<sup>99</sup> Andrew White, 'Avon is wrong, says Graves', *Evening Post*, 17<sup>th</sup> June 1982, p. 1.

<sup>100</sup> Stevelkura, *Avon County Wards 1981*, [Online], available at: [https://commons.wikimedia.org/wiki/File%3AAvon\\_County\\_wards\\_1981.png](https://commons.wikimedia.org/wiki/File%3AAvon_County_wards_1981.png) accessed 14<sup>th</sup> June 2017, reproduced in accordance with the following license: <https://creativecommons.org/licenses/by-sa/4.0/deed.en>.

The *Initial Study for an Avon Metro* identified these problems of transport governance in the County but also acknowledged that the creation of a PTE would require an Act of Parliament.<sup>101</sup> By comparison, German equivalents to PTEs, the Verkehrsverbunds, could be formed voluntarily by municipalities highlighting the difference in approach elsewhere.<sup>102</sup> The study instead suggested the setting up a corporate board consisting of British Rail, the local Bus company and Avon County Council to run the metro. This represented the closest form of integration of transport modes possible without a PTE and would require Avon County Council to finance operations of the metro.<sup>103</sup> Examining options for construction costs, the study dismissed the possibility of using private finance, foreseeing 'difficulties' in its application.<sup>104</sup> Instead it highlighted that in Tyne and Wear, its PTE was able to apply for a 70% infrastructure grant to construct its metro system which Avon County Council just could not do.<sup>105</sup> The study suggested either applying for such a grant anyway, or raising finance from other sources, such as a loan from the European Bank or seeking the implementation of a German model of local taxation on petrol to fund construction.<sup>106</sup> In Germany these had covered the cost of around 60% of transport infrastructure in municipalities with the remainder being provided by the state, showing their effectiveness. This, however, would require legislative change to be implemented in the United Kingdom to allow this.<sup>107</sup> The study, therefore, was conceptualising ways to work within, and modify, the existing structures of governance and funding in Avon to construct the metro, attempting to integrate public transport providers and the local

---

<sup>101</sup> *Avon Metro: Initial Study*, (1979), p. 14.

<sup>102</sup> C.A. Nash, (1985), 271.

<sup>103</sup> *Avon Metro: Initial Study*, (1979), p. 14.

<sup>104</sup> *Avon Metro: Initial Study*, (1979), p. 14.

<sup>105</sup> Richard Cottrell, 'All Aboard for the Avon Metro?', *Evening Post*, 18<sup>th</sup> August 1979, p. 2.; Bartlett, Hartley & Layfield, (1981), 673.

<sup>106</sup> *Avon Metro: Initial Study*, (1979), p. 15.

<sup>107</sup> C.A. Nash, (1985), 273.

authority as closely as possible without a PTE. At this stage it was not exploring the use of private finance to construct the system, proposing instead either local government funding, a central government grant or convincing the government to experiment with different models of taxation like in Germany.

On publication, the County Council regarded the *Initial Study* as an attempt by outsiders to direct its policy and reminded Cottrell that it held 'sole responsibility for the co-ordination of public transport in the county'.<sup>108</sup> It refused to fund the feasibility study costs of between £125,000 - £750,000 arguing that there was no inclination of where the costs for the system would come from.<sup>109</sup> Instead of the initial study acting as a 'hinge for discussion' as intended, the proposals were dismissed. The poor structure of governance in the region had created a situation where the council needed to assert itself yet was unwilling to push for a greater transport settlement due to the fractious politics in the region. The differing priorities of different areas of the county were displayed by Yate Town Council's supportive response to the Initial Study's proposals, visiting Glasgow's PTE and setting aside £2,000 towards the cost of the feasibility study.<sup>110</sup> Cottrell also found support from British Rail, which had helped to develop the initial plans, and a variety of transport pressure groups including Transport 2000, the Severn Beach Passenger Association and the Railway Development Society. These groups co-ordinated their voice into a pressure group called 'The Metro Partnership' to promote the idea of the metro.<sup>111</sup>

---

<sup>108</sup> Avon County Council, *Minutes of the Planning and Highways Committee of Avon County Council*, 21<sup>st</sup> November 1979, p. 1472., ACC/M/PH/26 Bristol Archives

<sup>109</sup> *Avon Metro: Initial Study*, (1979), p. 15.; Avon County Council, *Minutes of the Planning and Highways Committee of Avon County Council*, 21<sup>st</sup> November 1979, p. 1473, ACC/M/PH/26, Bristol Archives.; 'Metro? Cash is problem' *Evening Post*, 22<sup>nd</sup> November 1979, p. 6.

<sup>110</sup> Julie Hendry, 'Council studies Scots' metro system, *Evening Post*, 22<sup>nd</sup> January 1981, p. 5.; Julie Hendry, 'Town jumps on the Metro bandwagon', *Evening Post*, 2<sup>nd</sup> February 1981, Avon Metro 1979 – 1989 – Collection of Newspaper Articles, p. 42, Y5795168, Bristol Central Lending Library.; 'A Town says 'Yes' to the Metro plan', *Evening Post*, 8<sup>th</sup> November 1979, p. 6.

<sup>111</sup> Stuart Lawrence, 'Underground may be running by the 1990s', *Evening Post* 6<sup>th</sup> November 1980, p. 8.; 'Build that Metro', *Evening Post*, 13<sup>th</sup> May 1980, p. 2.; Julie Hendry, 'Group backs Metro', *Evening Post*, 9<sup>th</sup> February 1981, p. 3.;

With wide-ranging support from different organisations, Cottrell became a threat to the County Council's authority. When Cottrell attended the launch of County Council funded improvements to the Severn Beach line in 1981 to argue the case for the metro, the Labour group on the Council boycotted the event. Cottrell believed that this was for political reasons, remarking: 'there is an element of spitefulness about it. It doesn't matter if I am a socialist or a Conservative, what we are talking about here is the betterment of the public transportation system in Avon'.<sup>112</sup> In 1983 the Labour leader of the Council also criticised Cottrell's modus operandi writing in the *Evening Post* that Cottrell was 'a highly paid ex-journalist who spends most of his time writing newspaper columns...our representative in Europe is doing nothing'.<sup>113</sup> Party political allegiances in the region, caused partly by poor structure, had caused the metro concept to become an arena to act out political battles.

In conclusion, local government reforms left the county of Avon with a poor framework for local governance that did not allow effective transport policies for a large urban area such as Bristol. Census data for 1981 places the population of Avon close to the population of the Tyne and Wear region, yet they received completely different structures.<sup>114</sup> The resultant balkanisation of governance in the region created deep divisions and contributed to increased allegiance to party political lines and an inability to co-operate as a result. Bristol was therefore left at a significant disadvantage

---

Maggie Armstrong, 'New bid for multi-million metro plan', *Bristol Journal*, 27<sup>th</sup> June 1980, Avon Metro 1979 – 1989 – Collection of Newspaper Articles, p. 33, Y5795168, Bristol Central Lending Library.; W.J. Kent, 'Men of Vision wanted for an Avon Metro', *Letter to the Evening Post*, 1<sup>st</sup> August 1979, p. 30.

<sup>112</sup> Jonathon Shorney, 'Labour in a boycott of Avon Link', *Western Daily Press*, 23<sup>rd</sup> June 1981, p. 3.; Julie Hendry, 'Metro link claim is rapped by councillor', *Evening Post*, 10<sup>th</sup> June 1981, p. 2.; Julie Hendry, 'Councillors snub rail ceremony', *Evening Post*, 22<sup>nd</sup> June 1981, p. 1.; Julie Hendry, 'Metro link claim is rapped by councillor', *Evening Post*, 10<sup>th</sup> June 1981, p. 2.

<sup>113</sup> Mike Prestage, 'Council chief's fury at Euro MP', *Evening Post*, 8<sup>th</sup> April 1983, p. 2.

<sup>114</sup> Office for National Statistics, *1981 Census Population estimates - Table 8 – Local Authority Quinary age groups*, [Online] available at: <http://webarchive.nationalarchives.gov.uk/20160107185217/http://www.ons.gov.uk/ons/publications/reference-tables.html?edition=tcn%3A77-162562> accessed 16<sup>th</sup> September 2017.

compared to other cities as its governmental settlement did not have access to the level of funding required to construct an ambitious public transportation system. Cottrell's Avon Metro was envisioned as a way of exploring how to work around these problems and to act as a 'hinge for debate' on transport policy.<sup>115</sup> Yet the suggestions raised by the initial study required either changes to taxation policy or loans from the European Bank on an unprecedented scale and were dismissed by the County Council who came to see the proposals as a threat.<sup>116</sup> Instead of solving the problems with the structure, the metro just became another victim of the problems created by this structure. The lesson learnt by Cottrell was that if he wanted to see a metro built in the city of Bristol, he could not rely on the County Council to implement it.

### *The changing nature of the city and the emergence of the neoliberal agenda, 1979 - 1986*

This section examines how the changing nature of the city during the 1980s eventually led Cottrell, unable to convince the County Council to adopt his metro, to become influenced by neoliberal ideas. This would change the nature of the project from trying to work within the ineffective structure of governance in the region to changing the system of governance completely by 1986.

---

<sup>115</sup> Cottrell, January 1980, 18.

<sup>116</sup> *Avon Metro: Initial Study*, (1979), p. 15.; Avon County Council, *Minutes of the Planning and Highways Committee of Avon County Council*, 21<sup>st</sup> November 1979, p. 1473., ACC/M/PH/26 Bristol Archives

Poor transport infrastructure in urban areas can negatively affect a city's competitive edge and obstruct urban regeneration.<sup>117</sup> On the launch of the Initial Study, Cottrell identified that a metro system would allow the city to compete more effectively with European cities and that Tyne and Wear had seen economic benefits from export orders for components developed for its metro.<sup>118</sup> Tyne and Wear, he argued, considered its metro the best investment the city had made, contributing to its economic regeneration and that a metro in Avon could achieve similar results.<sup>119</sup> In this respect this reflects Saumarez Smith's assertion that the late 1970s were a 'brief moment' when failures in post-war planning could be appraised and tackled because funding was available for both redevelopment and infrastructure to deal with problems caused by deindustrialisation and suburbanisation.<sup>120</sup> This funding for transport was manifest in the grants available for the PTEs and Cottrell identified that Bristol could also benefit from this arguing, 'from 1981, Newcastle's need for funding [for the construction of its Metro] will begin to decline. That is the time for Avon to come forward with a sound, well-prepared case to go Metro'.<sup>121</sup> Thus expanding on how applying for a government grant despite the County having no right to do so could work.

During the 1970s, the economic base of cities was changing from an industrial base and towards the service sector. This was seen in Bristol with an additional 1.7 million square feet of office space having just been authorised at the time of the metro's conception whilst industrial closures such as the closure of St Anne's Boardmills factory and the Bristol Bus works.<sup>122</sup> At the time the main commuter line, the Severn

---

<sup>117</sup> Andrew Tallon, *Urban Regeneration in the UK*, (London: Routledge, 2010), p.116.; Richard Cottrell, 'All Aboard for the Avon Metro?', *Evening Post*, 18<sup>th</sup> August 1979, p. 2.

<sup>118</sup> Richard Cottrell, 'All Aboard for the Avon Metro?', *Evening Post*, 18<sup>th</sup> August 1979, p. 2.

<sup>119</sup> Richard Cottrell, 'All Aboard for the Avon Metro?', *Evening Post*, 18<sup>th</sup> August 1979, p. 2.

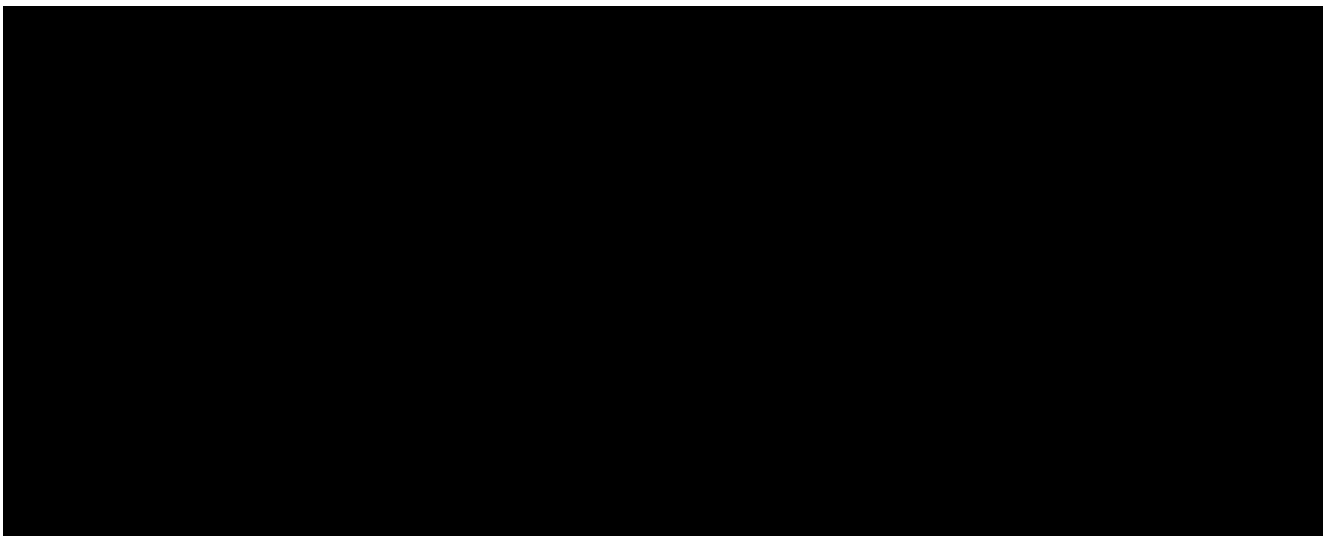
<sup>120</sup> Otto Saumarez Smith, 'The Inner-City Crisis and the End of Urban Modernism in 1970s Britain', *Twentieth Century British History*, 27-4 (2016), 597-598.

<sup>121</sup> Richard Cottrell, 'All Aboard for the Avon Metro?', *Evening Post*, 18<sup>th</sup> August 1979, p. 2.

<sup>122</sup> Andrew Tallon, (2010), p. 19.; Cottrell, January 1980, 23.

Beach Branch Line, carried only 1,200 passengers a day to Temple Meads Station; sited an inconvenient distance away from the city centre. A new route directly through the city would make rail much more attractive to the commuter travelling from the suburbs.<sup>123</sup> The Avon Metro aimed to support this emerging business-orientated city, as seen in illustrations in the initial study, shown in figure 4., showing business men in suits riding 'metrocars' and buses which carried clean, crisp, modern Avon Metro branding. The metrocars were to emerge from tunnels into well-lit, spacious and clean stations in the very heart of the business district of the city, as seen in figure 5., reflecting the key role the metro would play in the transformation from industrial to post-industrial cityscape.

*Figure. 4. Avon Metro station showing integration between modes.*<sup>124</sup>



---

<sup>123</sup> '£40,000 face-lift boosts rail link', *Evening Post*, 6<sup>th</sup> November 1982, p. 7.

<sup>124</sup> *Avon Metro: Initial Study*, (1979), p. 10.



*Figure. 5. Avon Metro underground station and metrocar and bus liveries.*<sup>125</sup>



Outlining the proposals, Cottrell explained that the metro took as its raw material:

the existing basic railway network, the tattered remnants of the largely-vanished Bristol suburban system: to this we added the trackless nature trails which make up the old Midland network and one or two emasculated Great Western Branches which nudge towards the suburbs and the country.<sup>126</sup>

The metro would, therefore, achieve a transformation of the city by re-appropriating the decaying industrial railway infrastructure that once transported goods to and around the city's harbour, now in terminal decline, to help provide the infrastructure for its business future. The proposed names for the lines, seen in figure 6., also reflected the change from industrial to post-industrial, linking the city's past history of trade and engineering, with lines such as 'Brunel' and 'Imperial', to present, high-tech, industries

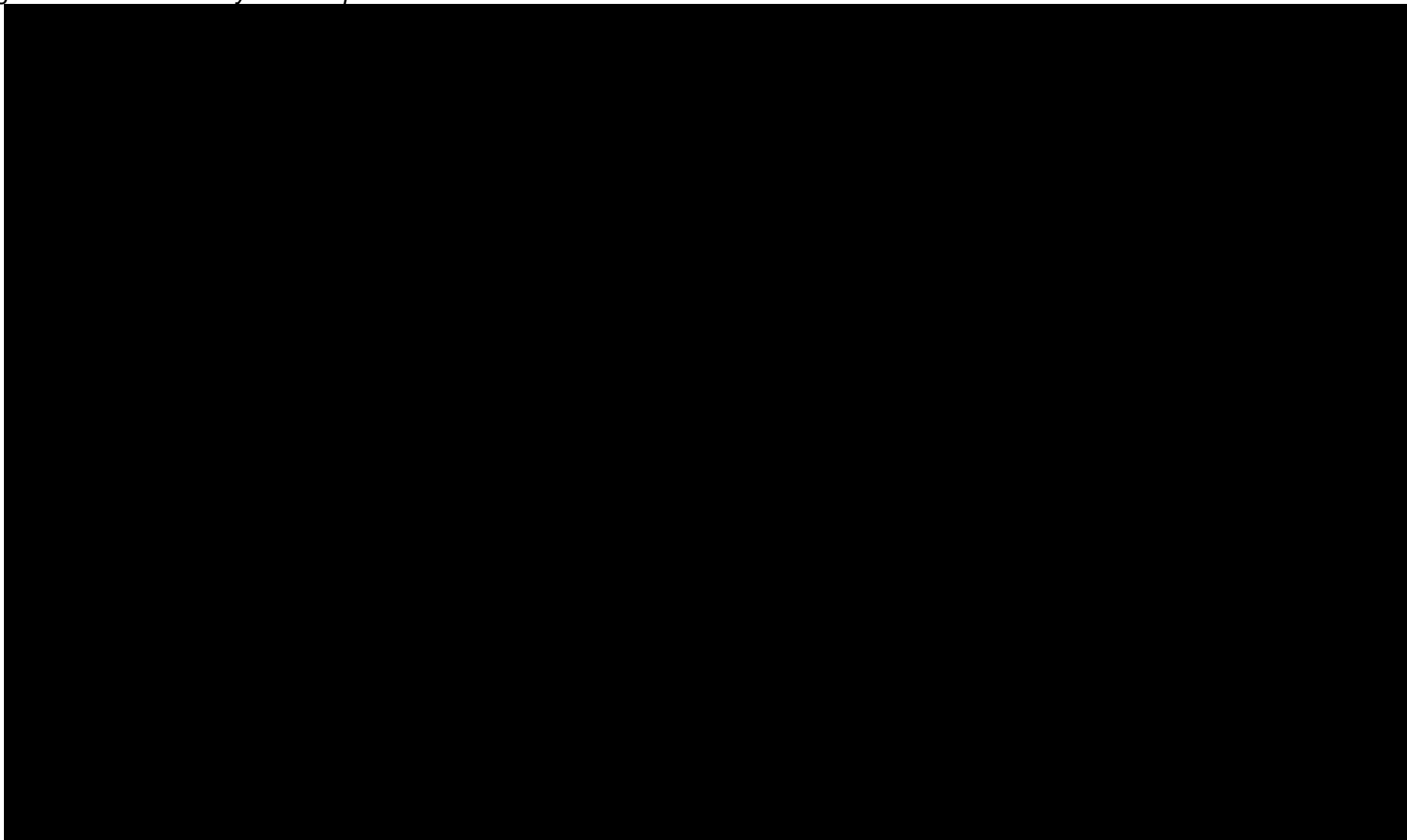
---

<sup>125</sup> *Avon Metro: Initial Study*, (1979), p. 9 & 11.

<sup>126</sup> Cottrell, January 1980, 18.

and the developing metropolitan centre, with lines such as 'Concorde' and 'Metropolitan'. The metro would be the catalyst for economic change in the city. It would help urban regeneration by rejuvenating Bristol's suburban railway network, repurposing it into a valuable resource for commuters, now that the need to move freight to the harbour by rail had gone. It would reflect the glories of Bristol's past and present whilst representing the future.

*Figure. 6. Avon Metro system map November 1979.<sup>127</sup>*



---

<sup>127</sup> *Avon Metro: Initial Study*, (1979), p. 8.

The changing economic foundation of the city, however, eventually influenced how the metro could be implemented. Following frustration at the County Council's refusals to fund the feasibility study, Cottrell told a conference in April 1982 that central government should instead pay for the construction of projects like the Avon Metro due to the inability of local government to fund these itself.<sup>128</sup> This was shortly after the construction of the Docklands Light Railway in London which had been paid for via a direct grant of £77million, contributed equally by the Ministry of Transport and Ministry of the Environment, to help regeneration of this area.<sup>129</sup> The London Docklands also represented the first stages of increased centralisation by the national government with the setting up of the London Docklands Development Company to provide the conditions for private investment and this was echoed in Cottrell's calls for greater central government involvement. Cottrell repeated calls for central government support in setting up metros at a fringe meeting at the Conservative Party conference in October 1982, but also advocated that private companies should be handed rural rail services to run with the aid of grants from local authorities.<sup>130</sup> Slowly, Cottrell was becoming influenced by neoliberal ideas of the ability of private ownership and the market to develop the metro. By 1986, this position had developed into the belief that the entire project could be financed by private finance at no cost to the taxpayer with construction implemented in stages to reduce the cost burden.<sup>131</sup> This change had occurred due to the County Council's inability to take-on the project and by national developments including the first tranche of privatisations by the government. This would be a departure from contemporary urban neoliberal policies as it envisioned

---

<sup>128</sup> 'Metro needs rating change', *Evening Post*, 6<sup>th</sup> April 1982, p. 12.

<sup>129</sup> Howard & Layfield, (1981), 652.; Jolly and Bayman, (1986), p. 5.

<sup>130</sup> David Harrison, 'Private line to success by Euro MP', *Evening Post*, 9<sup>th</sup> October 1982, p. 2.

<sup>131</sup> Julie Hendry, 'Avon rail Metro scheme lined up', *Evening Post*, 5<sup>th</sup> January 1984, p.5.; 'Extend West Rail Link', *Evening Post*, 1<sup>st</sup> March 1984, p. 10.; Julie Hendry, 'Move to extend Ghost Train', *Evening Post*, 26<sup>th</sup> March 1984, p. 5.; 'Trams 'would save shops'', *Evening Post*, 23<sup>rd</sup> May 1986, p. 75.

even less of a role for government in urban redevelopment than it had in setting up the UDCs to encourage private development as this need would be cut out.

This was supported by a changing landscape in local government. The Local Government Act (1985) abolished the six metropolitan counties along with the PTAs whilst the powers of the PTEs were reduced by the Transport Act (1985) which removed bus services from its control.<sup>132</sup> The model for transport governance that Bristol had aspired to in 1979 had now changed. The opportunity now existed to reform transport governance into a model that reflected both the current Thatcher government's ideology of reducing the control of local government, who had blocked the metro, and promoting the involvement of private finance in urban regeneration, which could provide funding for the metro. Cottrell seized on this moment by announcing the formation of a new company in November 1986 called Advanced Transport for Avon (ATA) which would construct the metro privately without the involvement of the County Council.

To conclude, the Avon Metro was originally conceived to spur regeneration of the city by re-utilising decaying industrial infrastructure but was frustrated by the lack of finance available to the County Council to take up the project. Originally developed to find solutions to this ineffective structure in 1979, the conceptual thinking behind the project evolved by the mid-1980s through a growing engagement with emerging neoliberal ideologies to break free of this constrictive structure. In doing so, the metro would try to reform transport governance by presenting a new model of governance due to the previous idealised model of PTEs and metropolitan counties having been broken down. The details of this new model would take time to evolve and is expanded

---

<sup>132</sup> Passenger Transport Executive Group, (1993) p. 9.

on in chapter two, but the concept was fixed of using the private sector to solve the problems of poorly-funded governmental structures in the region representing a significant and important change.

### *Conclusions from Chapter One*

This chapter has explored the conceptual origins of the Avon Metro and its development between 1979 and 1986. Several key developments are identified to add to the historical scholarship.

The Avon Metro concept was a reaction to specific conditions: an ongoing oil crisis, high car ownership in the Avon area, the progress of other cities of a similar economic make-up and comparisons to other systems in Europe. Whilst it did not achieve much in this period it conceptually tied together these ideas and expanded on them to produce a much more radical concept that sought to reduce the dependency on the car in the urban centre. This had an important impact on the nature of metro systems in the UK as after this they also sought to reduce the dependency on the car as one of their key goals.

An additional condition for the conception of the Avon Metro was the poor structure of government in the Avon region which had led to a lack of aspiration in transport projects and had been stifled by a lack of funding. The Avon Metro was envisioned to help the Council find solutions within this structure to improve the situation, but these solutions fell on death ears due to the fears of the council of others infringing on its responsibilities citing a lack of clear funding for the proposals. Early proposals for funding specifically saw problems with private finance and instead looked at how to achieve funding by asking the council to apply to sources such as the European Bank or to ask the central government for a grant. At this stage the Avon Metro was not a neoliberal project as it aimed to work within the structures and sought to use public money for its implementation.

In reaction to the poor response from the county council to the proposals, Cottrell started to embrace the growing neoliberal agenda by re-appraising the role that private finance could play in the provision of a metro for the city. This eventually came to envision the metro providing the basis for regeneration in the city but solely using private finance and eliminating the role of local government completely and involving no role for central government. This was a step further than the governments ideas for providing the basis for regeneration by setting up UDCs as the government would not be setting up the company as it would be a completely private affair. This highlights the path dependent nature in the unfolding of neoliberal ideas as argued by Brenner and Theodore. Yet at this stage the concept of how the money would be obtained from the private sector was not fleshed out and remained vague.



## Chapter Two

### The rise: Advanced Transport for Avon and the recrafting of transport governance, November 1986 – May 1989

By 1986, reforms by the Thatcher government were starting to change the political and economic landscape of the United Kingdom. Neoliberal policies of privatisations, a rolling back of the state and the creation of Urban Development Corporations to encourage private investment in urban regeneration aimed to make the state the enabler rather than provider of services.<sup>133</sup> In addition, reforms to local government had dismantled the structure of transport governance through reducing the power of local authorities and transport executives and deregulating bus services. This process caused particular consternation in local District Labour Parties (DLPs) as many of these reforms sought to undermine control of Labour-led councils nationally.<sup>134</sup>

Within this context, Cottrell announced the foundation of a company called Advanced Transport for Avon (ATA) in November 1986. This would construct the metro and not rely on the County Council to adopt the idea. He would be Chairman and Brian Tucker, who had previously worked on the 1979 plans, was named Managing Director.<sup>135</sup> ATA would work outside the constrictive structures of local governance and finance which had stopped progress on the construction of the metro up to this point. In doing so, ATA would act as a pioneering project to establish the extent to which private finance could form a new model for the provision of public transport infrastructure. The project would face several obstacles. The District Labour Party and the Bennite MP for Labour South, Dawn Primarolo, were both hostile to the

---

<sup>133</sup> Maurice Mullard and Raymond Swaray, 'The Politics of Public Expenditure from Thatcher to Blair', *Policy and Politics*, 34-3 (2006), 496, 498.

<sup>134</sup> Andrew Thorpe, *A History of the British Labour Party*, (Palgrave Macmillan: Basingstoke, 2015), p. 223

<sup>135</sup> Michael Lord, 'Metro makes tracks for Avon rail future', *Evening Post*, 20<sup>th</sup> November 1986, p. 1-2.

idea of a private company owning a public transportation system and this hostility spread to the Labour-led City Council. The City Council feared that the compulsory purchase powers ATA would seek in its private bills would further erode its power and promote unsuitable developments. The metro, therefore, became drawn into a new battleground this time between the those hoping to preserve the power of local authorities and those hoping to develop emerging neoliberal ideas about the role of the state. Yet, despite strong opposition, ATA was successful in 1989 in achieving royal assent for its first parliamentary bill authorising the construction of the initial section of the system.<sup>136</sup> This suggested that the new model that ATA had presented could work and the concept was, to this point, succeeding.

This chapter explores how ATA attempted to recraft transport governance by examining the rationale behind the concept and the development of its financial model. The chapter will then explore how this recrafting of transport governance played out between 1986 and 1989 to identify how the company was able to obtain royal assent for its first Parliamentary Act despite stiff opposition to the entire concept. The chapter examines how successfully ATA implemented the neoliberal agenda the government promoted of seeing private companies take on responsibilities for areas in which the state had previously provided. Finally, the chapter examines how attitudes to the car and public transportation were beginning to change in the city due to the debate caused by ATA and what long-term consequences were beginning to emerge from this debate.

---

<sup>136</sup> Michael Lord, 'It's go! Metro gets the big yes', *Evening Post*, 11<sup>th</sup> May 1989, p. 1.

### *The recrafting of Transport governance, 1986 - 1987*

Up to 1986 progress on an Avon Metro had stalled due to Avon County Council refusing to adopt the concept due to an ineffective framework of financing to support infrastructure development. ATA positioned itself as an innovative solution to the lack of leadership and finance in the county to enable the metro's construction. ATA attempted to recraft transport governance, using private finance, instead of local authority funding or central government grant, to construct the metro. Other metro projects in the United Kingdom at this time, by comparison, operated under a Design, Build, Operate and Maintain (DBOM) contract between the local authority and the private sector. Here funding came jointly from the local authority and a central government grant as in the case of the Manchester Metrolink.<sup>137</sup> ATA, however, intended to own and operate the system itself and not be under any form of local authority control. Its funding would come from where the metro would help to regenerate parts of the city through a financial model known as 'planning gain'. This was where developers would contribute funds based on the projected increased value of their land from the provision of the metro. As such, the metro represented a form of redevelopment among neoliberal principles of encouraging the free-market and reducing the role of the state that was similar to Urban Development Corporations in providing the foundation for redevelopment yet would not receive any funding from governmental sources at all.

---

<sup>137</sup> J.R. Hall & G.J.D. Porter, 'The design, build, operate and maintain contract as applied to Manchester's Metrolink', *The proceedings of the Institution of Civil Engineers – Transport*, 11-4 (1995), 310.

Richard Cottrell first raised the possibility of private finance funding the Avon Metro in May 1986.<sup>138</sup> Shortly after, a feasibility study into the plans, which Avon County Council had long refused to fund, was announced to be undertaken in the September.<sup>139</sup> This was to be paid for by Hawker-Siddely Group plc., which operated a railway vehicle manufacturing subsidiary.<sup>140</sup> By November, the formation of Advanced Transport for Avon (ATA), a private company, was announced to build and operate the metro.<sup>141</sup> The initial plans, published in November 1986, were almost identical to the 1979 proposals of a new central underground tunnel carrying suburban rail services.<sup>142</sup> Yet through 1987, these plans underwent significant change. Banking and construction groups joined the project, a £1 million business study was undertaken, and a target set of beginning operations within four years.<sup>143</sup> The proposals were officially relaunched in an interview with Cottrell in the *Evening Post* on 28<sup>th</sup> October 1987 where he announced that ATA were 'bringing back the tram' and sought to construct a street-running tramway system instead of an underground railway.<sup>144</sup> To obtain powers to construct the system, ATA were to submit three private parliamentary bills, submitted in yearly intervals. The routes covered in these are shown in figure 7. The route in the first bill (in yellow), sought to take-over the existing, disused, Portishead Line, running from the commuter town of Portishead and along the Avon Gorge. The bill also sought powers to obtain sections of the Bristol Harbour Railway, which connected to this line at Ashton Gate, to run to Wapping Wharf just

---

<sup>138</sup> 'Trams 'would save shops'', *Evening Post*, 23<sup>rd</sup> May 1986, p. 75.

<sup>139</sup> Martin Powell, '£100m Metro Link Hopes', *Evening Post*, 16<sup>th</sup> July 1986, p. 3.

<sup>140</sup> 'City in line for new metro system', *Evening Post*, 10<sup>th</sup> September 1986, p. 10.

<sup>141</sup> Michael Lord, 'Metro makes tracks for Avon rail future', *Evening Post*, 20<sup>th</sup> November 1986, p. 1-2.

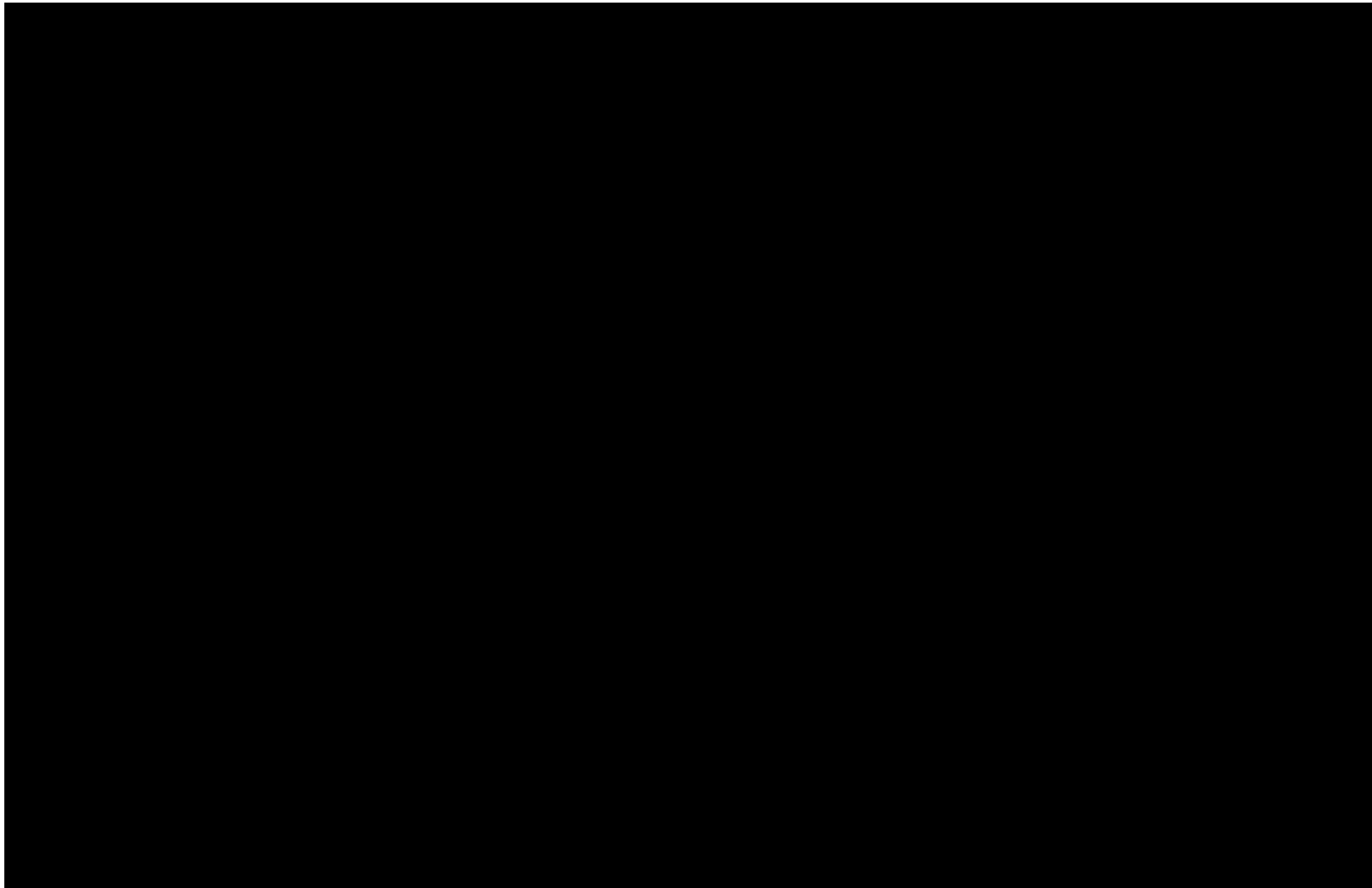
<sup>142</sup> Michael Lord, 'Metro makes tracks for Avon rail future', *Evening Post*, 20<sup>th</sup> November 1986, p. 1.

<sup>143</sup> Michael Lord, 'Hopes rise for Metro', *Evening Post*, 18<sup>th</sup> February 1987, p. 10.; Nigel Heath, 'Ideal for homes?' *Evening Post*, 31<sup>st</sup> March 1987, p. 1.; Michael Lord, 'Giants join in bid for Avon Metro', *Evening Post*, 3<sup>rd</sup> April 1987, p. 1.; Nigel Heath, 'New Jobs, new homes', *Evening Post*, 9<sup>th</sup> June 1987, p. 1.; Norman Cossland, 'Avon Metro: £1m study is lined up', *Evening Post*, 12<sup>th</sup> May 1987, p. 4.; Michael Lord, 'Metro arrives in 'Four years'', *Evening Post*, 17<sup>th</sup> July 1987, p. 2.

<sup>144</sup> Michael Lord, 'The Supertram gathers pace', *Evening Post*, 28<sup>th</sup> October 1987, p. 6.

short of the city centre. The second bill's route, (in red) would be pursued the following year and would extend the line from Wapping Wharf through the city centre. The third bill's route (in orange), would complete this cross-city route up to Yate. Routes could later be added, either adopting existing railway lines or consisting of new construction, until a network was completed linking up the railway lines around the city as shown in figure 8.

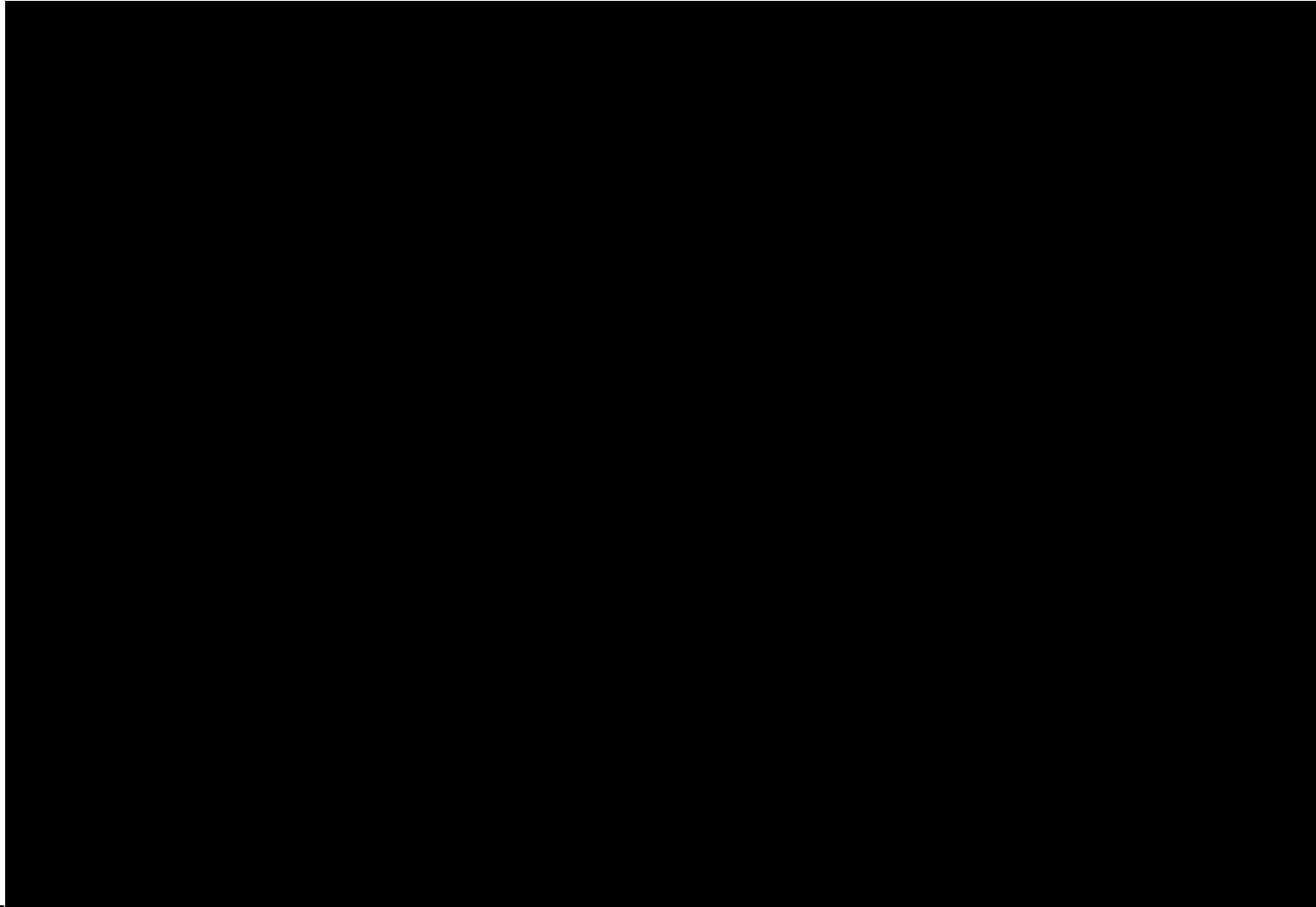
*Figure. 7. Avon Metro plans 1987 showing the different stages.*<sup>145</sup>



---

<sup>145</sup> Advanced Transport for Avon Limited, 'Avon LRT Routes', [online] available at: <http://www.bristolpost.co.uk/news/history/why-bristol-doesnt-have-trams-724497> accessed 23<sup>rd</sup> December 2017.

*Figure. 8. Avon Metro proposed completed system map - 1987.* <sup>146</sup>



---

<sup>146</sup> Advanced Transport for Avon Limited, 'Light Rail Transit in Avon' (Advanced Transport for Avon: 1987), p. 3.

Railway construction had historically been authorised through the passage of Private Acts of Parliament but following the grouping of the big-four railway companies in the 1920s and then post-war nationalisation, there was little requirement for such bills to be passed.<sup>147</sup> Private Acts gave promoters powers to compulsory purchase land, where required, and avoided the need for formal planning permission. This meant that both local authority involvement and the need for a public inquiry could be evaded.<sup>148</sup> It was possible to petition against these bills in Parliament, but only those whom were specifically affected by the bill could do so.<sup>149</sup> This meant that the only potential objectors to ATA's plans were those who owned the land which ATA sought to run its tramway over and they could only object over how it affected the land directly. The land owner, for a large part of the route, was the City Council. This method aimed to make the process of gaining permission much simpler and ATA would submit bills in different stages as and when it was ready. Yet, for the City Council, this meant it could not block the system for being the wrong type of development for the city, only oppose the system over the effect on the land directly involved. Private bills had to be deposited in Parliament by the end of November to be considered in that parliamentary session and with ATA only announcing the change to trams in October 1987, this left a very short amount of time for the local authorities to respond to ATA's proposals providing the company with some of its initial problems.<sup>150</sup>

---

<sup>147</sup> House of Commons Information Office, 'Private Bills - House of Commons Information Office Factsheet L4', HCIO (2010), p. 1-2 [online] available at <https://www.parliament.uk/documents/commons-information-office/l04.pdf> accessed 20<sup>th</sup> December 2017.

<sup>148</sup> O Simon, 'Seminar Report: Reforming the Private Bill Procedure', *Proceedings of the Institution of Civil Engineers – Municipal Engineer*, 93 – 2 (1992), 123.

<sup>149</sup> House of Commons Background Paper: Private Bills in Parliament, 7<sup>th</sup> January 2014, <http://researchbriefings.parliament.uk/ResearchBriefing/Summary/SN06508> accessed 4<sup>th</sup> December 2017.

<sup>150</sup> House of Commons Information Office, 'Private Bills - House of Commons Information Office Factsheet L4', HCIO (2010), p. 2-4 [online] available at <https://www.parliament.uk/documents/commons-information-office/l04.pdf> accessed 20<sup>th</sup> December 2017.



The metro was soon heralded as a 'free-gift' to the city of Bristol, as ATA intended to pay for its construction using private finance only and without reliance on rates or taxes.<sup>151</sup> ATA would use a method called 'planning gain' to raise finance to pay for construction of the system where developers would contribute towards the cost based on the increase in land values that would result from the metro's construction.<sup>152</sup> This would also spark urban regeneration by making areas more attractive to developers. *The Times* approved of this model, noting that the route outlined in the first stage 'passes sites fat with development potential' in its assessment of the scheme.<sup>153</sup> Planning gain was previously used on a small scale by the London Docklands Development Company in London, but had not yet been used to finance the construction of a railway or on this scale before.<sup>154</sup> ATA would therefore be using a new and innovative method of financing in its recrafting of transport governance to raise money by adding value to future developments for the first time in a non-London context.

Initial funding for ATA came from Hawker-Siddely who funding the feasibility study based on potential future orders for rolling stock.<sup>155</sup> Trafalgar House, a large construction group joined the project in 1987. It had recently sought permission to build homes on the disused Portishead Power Station site and with the first section of the route running from here this is where the funds from 'planning gain' would come from.<sup>156</sup> ATA's backers therefore represented private companies working together in

---

<sup>151</sup> Michael Lord, '£350m Metro back in town', *Evening Post*, 10th November 1986, p. 3.; Councillor Andrew May, 'The cost of a 'free gift' to our city', *Letter to the Evening Post*, 9th December 1987, p. 41.

<sup>152</sup> Michael Lord, 'The Supertram gathers pace', *Evening Post*, 28th October 1987, p. 6.

<sup>153</sup> Terence Bedixson, 'A rattling good idea', *The Times*, 1st December 1987, p. 25.

<sup>154</sup> Michael Lord, 'Avon metro profits pledge', *Evening Post*, 5th November 1987, p. 2.; O.C. Taner and Steven Tiesdell, 'The London Docklands Development Corporation (LDDC), 1981 – 1991 – A perspective on the management of urban regeneration', *Town Planning Review*, 62 – 3 (1991), 323-325.

<sup>155</sup> 'City in line for new metro system', *Evening Post*, 10th September 1986, p. 10.

<sup>156</sup> Nigel Heath, 'Ideal for homes?' *Evening Post*, 31st March 1987, p. 1.; Michael Lord, 'Giants join in bid for Avon Metro', *Evening Post*, 3rd April 1987, p. 1.; Nigel Heath, 'New Jobs, new homes', *Evening Post*, 9th June 1987, p.

a mutual interest, to provide transport infrastructure and to benefit their future business showing how the market would self-regulate without the need for governmental interference as a different model of neoliberal ideas to what was occurring in Enterprise Zones and Urban Development Corporations to encourage regeneration.

Overall costs were reduced by switching mode from underground railway to street-running trams. This would not entail the construction of an expensive underground tunnel beneath the city and followed similar developments in both Manchester and London. In Manchester, plans to build an underground railway connecting its two main stations, Piccadilly and Victoria, were abandoned based on cost with the city turning towards trams as a cheaper alternative.<sup>157</sup> In London, the cost of extending the London Underground to the London Docklands development area was estimated at £325million before the decision was made to build a surface light rail system, the Docklands Light Railway for £77million instead.<sup>158</sup> Submitting bills in stages also reduced costs as this avoided dealing with all the problems that would arise at once and allow greater freedom to perfect each section, which was also important considering the late change in mode for the proposed system.

ATA also provided an alternative to the ineffective structure of governance in the region. The problems of governance were displayed again in August 1986 when the City and County Councils squabbled over competing plans to reduce traffic in the city centre and improve the urban environment. The City Council wanted to make large parts of the city centre traffic free, whilst the County Council feared these proposals would interfere with its own plans to link 75 sets of traffic lights to a computer-controlled

---

1.; Norman Cossland, 'Avon Metro: £1m study is lined up', *Evening Post*, 12<sup>th</sup> May 1987, p. 4.; Michael Lord, 'Metro arrives in 'Four years'', *Evening Post*, 17<sup>th</sup> July 1987, p. 2.

<sup>157</sup> Eric Ogden & John Senior, *Manchester Metrolink* (Glossop: Transport Publishing Company Limited, 1991), p. 4-5.

<sup>158</sup> Green, (2016), p. 220 & p. 222.

system in the city.<sup>159</sup> ATA represented an alternative model of the market, not squabbling tiers of elected officials, solving the requirements of the city and carrying the risk involved. This was at a time when both tiers could not co-operate, nor able to suggest a comprehensive solution to the traffic issues beyond pedestrianisation of a few roads or linking lights. A comprehensive metro system was again presented as the solution. Only now it didn't require either tier to embrace it or finance it, and ATA could just get on and start the process of obtaining permission from Parliament to build it.<sup>160</sup>

To conclude, following government reforms to reduce the powers of local government, the conditions existed for a new model of transport governance in the United Kingdom which ATA attempted to fill. Reflecting the government's neoliberal agenda and announced during a period of economic growth, ATA would construct the Avon Metro using only private finance and evading the ineffective governmental structures by using the market instead. Presented as a 'free-gift' to the city of Bristol, ATA would use the method of 'planning gain' for the first time outside London. This would solve the problem of where funding would come from. ATA sought the passage of private bills through Parliament, the first in a generation for a privately financed railway company, to authorise construction of the metro and gain powers of compulsory purchase to buy the track bed. This meant that any opposition to the project would come from issues relating to land and not from opposition to the concept. This model meant that the tiers of local government, which had shown an inability to work together or effectively solve the transport issues in the city, would not be required

---

<sup>159</sup> Mike Prestage, 'Keep out the cars' – Labour drive for traffic ban in centre', *Evening Post*, 5<sup>th</sup> August 1986, p. 1.; Mike Prestage, 'City centre car ban plan is a 'shocker'', *Evening Post*, 6<sup>th</sup> August 1986, p. 3.

<sup>160</sup> Richard Cottrell, 'The Metro Solution', *Letter to the Evening Post*, 20<sup>th</sup> August 1986, p. 41.; R.L Smith, 'Metro won't revive this dead city', *Letter to the Evening Post*, 22<sup>nd</sup> August 1986, p. 77.; Richard Cottrell, 'Metro is essential to keep city alive', *Letter to the Evening Post*, 27<sup>th</sup> August 1986, p. 33.

to lead the project and instead a combination of companies working together and carrying the risk would do so instead. This would spark urban regeneration and investment in the city on a wider basis by the provision of useful transport infrastructure. A shift from underground railway to street-running trams and the decision to obtain parliamentary approval in stages would reduce the overall cost of the system. ATA presented a new form of transport governance, at a time when neoliberalism was challenging the economic and governmental structure of the country, that sought to radically alter the current process for implementing public transportation in the urban centre. The next section will examine the reactions to this recrafting of transport governance and how the attempt to implement this model unfolded between 1987 and 1989.

### *How did the recrafting of transport governance play out, 1987 – 1989?*

Shortly after presenting its new model for transport governance, ATA deposited its first Avon Light Rail Transit Bill in Parliament in November 1987. Due to its radical nature, ATA faced many obstacles in the battle to get this bill passed. This section follows the progress of this bill and the reaction by both tiers of local government to this model, through to the bill achieving royal assent in May 1989. It then assesses how effective its model was in practice to ascertain how ATA fared in a changing landscape of local governance.

When ATA submitted the first bill to Parliament on the 19<sup>th</sup> November 1987, both tiers of government in the region voiced concern. Despite the concept of a metro dating back to 1979 and the idea to construct it privately being announced in November 1986, it was not until 28<sup>th</sup> October 1987 when the use of planning gain to

fund construction or the use of street-running trams was announced.<sup>161</sup> The tight parliamentary deadline to submit the bill before the end of November left only twenty-three days for both tiers of local government to assess the project's impact. The City Council, which owned the track bed of the Bristol Harbour Railway, feared losing it if ATA obtained compulsory purchase powers. It also feared the loss of the Portishead Line which it hoped could connect Royal Portbury Dock, which it ran and operated, to the national rail network to transport freight.<sup>162</sup> The County Council felt that the project was 'premature' and required assurances that ATA had sufficient financial resources to construct and operate the project.<sup>163</sup> Both tiers formed sub-committees to discuss responses to the proposals and drew up petitions of objections to be presented in Parliament to protect their interests.<sup>164</sup> Both tiers complained about a lack of information about the project. The City Council despatched a series of urgent questions to ATA demanding why there had been a lack of consultation with them. ATA responded it didn't need to consult with the City Council due to the private nature of the scheme.<sup>165</sup> This highlighted the different positions the two held on the role of the local authorities in the provision of a metro. Cottrell took to local newspapers to decry 'we haven't just drawn this scheme on the back of an envelope, we have been talking in detail with local authorities for the past year and everyone has known of the

---

<sup>161</sup> 'The Supertram gathers pace', *Evening Post*, 28<sup>th</sup> October 1987, p. 6.; Michael Lord, '£350m Metro back in town', *Evening Post*, 10<sup>th</sup> November 1986, p. 3.; Michael Lord, 'The Metro starts its long journey', *Evening Post*, 19<sup>th</sup> November 1987, p. 16.

<sup>162</sup> Nigel Heath and Andrew White, 'Port bid to sink the Metro', *Evening Post*, 11<sup>th</sup> November 1987, p. 3.; Michael Lord, 'More trouble on the Metro Line', *Evening Post*, 13<sup>th</sup> November 1987, p. 11.

<sup>163</sup> 'Metro: Avon looks at the small print', *Evening Post*, 3<sup>rd</sup> December 1987, p. 3.; David Baxter, 'Block Metro, County will be told', *Evening Post*, 8<sup>th</sup> December 1987, p. 1.

<sup>164</sup> Bristol City Council, Minutes of a meeting of the ATA subcommittee, 10<sup>th</sup> February 1988 p. 1., M/BCC/ATA/1. Bristol Archives.; Avon County Council, Minutes of a meeting of the Avon Light Rail Transit (Special) Committee, 8<sup>th</sup> December 1987, p. 4., ACC/M/PHT/ALRT/ ACC 820, Bristol Archives.

<sup>165</sup> Bristol City Council, Appendix – Questions to be asked of Advanced transport for Avon regarding its proposals for the Avon Metro network, 10<sup>th</sup> February 1988, p. 1., M/BCC/ATA/1, Bristol Archives. Letter from Brian Tucker to City Clerk – Appendix to Minutes of a meeting of the ATA subcommittee, 25<sup>th</sup> February 1988, p. 7, M/BCC/ATA/1, Bristol Archives.

Metro for the last eight years' in reaction to the City Council's initial response.<sup>166</sup> Attempts to reduce the overall cost of the project with the move to trams and a lack of understanding by the local authorities on how private finance could contribute to transport had both combined to cause the biggest initial problems for the project.

Other opponents included the Cycling group 'Cyclebag' and the Easton Community Association. Both feared the loss of the Bristol to Bath Railway Path, outlined as a future route of the metro.<sup>167</sup> Bristol Civic Society, which supported the idea of an underground system, objected to the use of trams due to the perceived effect this would have on traffic in the city centre.<sup>168</sup> Yet the most sustained opposition to the metro came from Dawn Primarolo, Labour MP for Bristol South. Primarolo was a Bennite who had replaced former Chief Whip, Michael Cocks, as the DLP's candidate in 1985 when he was deselected by the district party for being too centrist.<sup>169</sup> Primarolo bitterly opposed the metro, disagreeing with the entire concept of a private company building and operating a public transportation system and promised to fight the bill through parliament.<sup>170</sup> Opposition from the entire DLP quickly followed and it voted to oppose the project on the same basis.<sup>171</sup> ATA then entrenched old rivalries by recruiting Michael Cocks himself, now Lord Cocks of Hartcliffe, to its board, making

---

<sup>166</sup> Michael Lord, 'MPs in war of words', *Evening Post*, 10<sup>th</sup> November 1987, p. 4.

<sup>167</sup> Judith Pike, 'Riders let off steam over the metro', *Evening Post*, 25<sup>th</sup> July 1985, p. 1; George Locker, 'Lining up a move to reopen railway', *Evening Post*, 11<sup>th</sup> August 1987, p. 4.; 'Making tracks to rail protest', *Evening Post*, 7<sup>th</sup> October 1987, p. 8.; Martin Powell, 'Metro should 'take a back seat'', *Evening Post*, 13<sup>th</sup> October 1987, p. 10.; Martin Powell, 'Thumbs down for 'cowboy metro'', *Evening Post*, 14<sup>th</sup> October 1987, p. 8.

<sup>168</sup> James C. Briggs, 'Rail link must go under city', *Letter to the Evening Post*, 11<sup>th</sup> August 1987, p. 13.; David Baxter, 'Metro: Give us the facts', *Evening Post*, 18<sup>th</sup> November 1987, p. 1.; Lawrence Trackman, 'Avon metro: Why we're worried', *Development Director of the Bristol Civic Society – Editorial in the Evening Post*, 18<sup>th</sup> November 1987, p. 7.; Michael Lord, 'Cottrell accuses Metro critics', *Evening Post*, 19<sup>th</sup> November 1987, p. 3.

<sup>169</sup> Michael Lord, 'Rosy start for Dawn', *Evening Post*, 12<sup>th</sup> June 1987, p. 9.; Michael Lord, 'Cocks loses a battle', *Evening Post*, 8<sup>th</sup> January 1986, p. 4.; Andrew Roth, 'Obituary – Lord Cocks of Hartcliffe', *The Guardian Online* <https://www.theguardian.com/news/2001/mar/27/guardianobituaries> accessed 18<sup>th</sup> October 2017.

<sup>170</sup> Michael Lord, 'Beware the Metro express, says MP', *Evening Post*, 6<sup>th</sup> November 1987, p. 12.; Michael Lord, 'MPs in war of words', *Evening Post*, 10<sup>th</sup> November 1987, p. 4.

<sup>171</sup> Michael Lord, 'More trouble on Metro line', *Evening Post*, 13<sup>th</sup> November 1987, p. 11

this also a battle of personalities.<sup>172</sup> This brought the Labour-led City Council, as well as the Labour group on the County Council, into resolute opposition to the project. This highlighted the depth of influence of the left of the Labour party in Bristol and the strong party discipline which had been caused partly by the balkanisation of government in the region and also in reaction to policies undertaken by the Thatcher government to reduce the role of local government and promote private finance.

The City Council was concurrently fighting proposals to create an UDC in the city which would remove control over a large area of the city from the council.<sup>173</sup> So the compulsory purchase powers ATA sought also represented a further erosion of its powers as it threatened to take land from the council as it owned the track bed. Fighting the metro became a way of opposing the Thatcher governments agenda of marginalising local government and encouraging private finance played out on a local stage. In addition, the City Council also held concerns that the project would undermine the council's independence as the planning authority. Andrew May, deputy leader of the council, questioned the pressure that planning gain would place on the council's planning department:

raising sums of this magnitude must mean an in-built pressure to get the maximum value out of any adjacent site. What happens if the City Council prefers, say, open space, or leisure or recreational uses or indeed any other less commercial use? <sup>174</sup>

Primarolo meanwhile argued that ATA was just a front for property speculators who would benefit from the increase in value of their developments.<sup>175</sup> She criticised the powers that would be given to a private company and the lack of scrutiny from the

---

<sup>172</sup> Michael Lord, 'Cocks joins Metro team', *Evening Post*, 24<sup>th</sup> November 1987, p. 1.

<sup>173</sup> 'Disaster' plan for city', *Evening Post*, 19<sup>th</sup> November 1987, p. 18; Martin Powell, 'We'll share your city', *Evening Post*, 19<sup>th</sup> March 1987, p. 1.; Mike Prestage, 'City's hopes and fears', *Evening Post*, 9<sup>th</sup> December 1987. p. 16.

<sup>174</sup> Councillor Andrew May, The cost of a 'free gift' to our city, *Letter to the Evening Post*, 9<sup>th</sup> December 1987, p. 41.

<sup>175</sup> HC Deb 24<sup>th</sup> January 1989, vol. 145, col 957.

pursuit of private bills which evaded any form of local inquiry.<sup>176</sup> She argued that the private nature of the metro would mean services would only run along profitable routes rather than provide a public service.<sup>177</sup> As the first project of this nature, there were clear questions and fears about the impact on development, operations and control that came with the metro being privately owned and this formed initial resistance to the project highlighting the contested nature of neoliberal ideas.

Primarolo also felt that ATA was a method to entrench the ideology of the Thatcher government. During the commons debate on the second reading of the bill, Primarolo evidenced this with a letter she had accidentally received from Conservative MP Jerry Wiggins, sponsor of the bill. This letter, designed to encourage Conservative MPs to support the bill, stated: 'A number of the far left on Bristol City Council are opposed to private enterprise providing transport solutions.... similar proposals for other cities could be damaged if [Primarolo] is able to defeat us'.<sup>178</sup> Michael Portillo, Minister for Public Transport, responded that '[the government] welcome's the private sector initiative on which the project is based. That accords closely with the Government's wish to see the private sector involved to the greatest possible extent in the efficient provision of public transport'.<sup>179</sup> The model that ATA had presented, therefore, was seen by the government as a template for further retrenchment of the public sector by passing the provision of rail-based public transport to the private sector. This was well in advance of the eventual privatisation of the railways in 1997.

---

<sup>176</sup> HC Deb 24<sup>th</sup> January 1989, vol. 145, cols 957, 958 & 962

<sup>177</sup> Michael Lord, 'Beware the metro express, says MP', *Evening Post*, 6<sup>th</sup> November 1987, p. 12.

<sup>178</sup> HC Deb 24<sup>th</sup> January 1989, vol. 145, col 956.

<sup>179</sup> HC Deb 24<sup>th</sup> January 1989, vol 145, cols 963 – 964.



Primarolo's distrust further increased as commercial confidentiality was used by ATA to explain why it could not provide details of funding. Her suspicions on the company's viability were heightened by reports that ATA were considering applying for a government grant in April 1988 to contribute towards construction.<sup>180</sup> This raised the possibility that the local authority would be expected to contribute to the project via matched funding, as was normal for a government grant, despite not being involved. This undermined the whole concept of ATA as privately funded project.<sup>181</sup> ATA denied that it was applying for government money, yet this did little to soothe Primarolo's, and by extension the DLP's, concerns about the viability of a privately funded metro scheme.<sup>182</sup> The idea of a privately financed metro, had become about more than improving mobility and reducing congestion in the city, it was about how far the governments neoliberal agenda could extend and how far it could be fought against. Jack Penrose, a consultant to ATA who also contributed to Manchester's Metrolink, reflected that:

It was different and new and that was its strength, but it was also its weakness because it's very hard to get political parties of any persuasion if they don't know or have a hand on the funding of it in political terms. You don't get a lot of support.<sup>183</sup> Nearly all the public debates and so on were about who was funding it and who was behind it, which, looking back, is rather pathetic and sad but, nevertheless, that was it. It wasn't a flawed system. It was a political system. It was a system that only certain politics and politicians could support.<sup>184</sup> You have to understand almost what the atmosphere was like to understand why people were taking certain reactions. It became a political issue and not a question of whether it was the right system.<sup>185</sup>

---

<sup>180</sup> HC Deb 24<sup>th</sup> January 1989, vol. 145, col 960.; Michael Lord, 'Metro chief's Yes to grants cash', *Evening Post*, 29<sup>th</sup> April 1988, p. 2.; 'Metro cash talks', *Evening Post*, 10<sup>th</sup> May 1988, p. 5.; Michael Lord, 'Metro backers in bid for cash aid', *Evening Post*, 17<sup>th</sup> May 1988, p. 5.

<sup>181</sup> HC Deb 24<sup>th</sup> January 1989, vol. 145, col 958.; Martin Powell, 'MP Dawn wants the Metro facts', *Evening Post*, 8<sup>th</sup> June 1988, p. 2.

<sup>182</sup> HC Deb 24<sup>th</sup> January 1989, vol. 145, col 963.

<sup>183</sup> Jack Penrose Interview, p. 10.

<sup>184</sup> Jack Penrose interview, p. 4.

<sup>185</sup> Jack Penrose interview, p. 3.

Despite strong opposition, ATA did attempt to appease both local authorities. Avon County Council, at this time led by a coalition of Conservative and Alliance councillors were able to outvote their Labour colleagues and withdrew opposition to the project in February 1988 after receiving assurances and undertakings from the company to protect its interests.<sup>186</sup> The County Council subsequently adopted a policy of joint working with ATA on the second bill resulting in close collaboration and the council finally investigated adopting LRT as council policy.<sup>187</sup> The Labour-led City Council, meanwhile, maintained its opposition to the bill over the powers it would give ATA and over ATA's 'cavalier' attitude towards the council with a lack of consultation.<sup>188</sup> This opposition continued despite the City Council receiving advice that an objection based on a lack of consultation would be considered 'a thing of the past' and in addition to advice from the City Clerk that by October 1988 ATA had given enough assurances for the Council to withdraw its petition.<sup>189</sup>

---

<sup>186</sup> Norman Crossland, 'It's Yes to metro, but only just', *Evening Post*, 11<sup>th</sup> December 1987, p. 3.; Mike Prestage, 'High hopes for ending Avon metro objections', *Evening Post*, 19<sup>th</sup> January 1988, p. 8.; Kevan Blackadder, 'Avon in U-turn on Metro plans', *Evening Post*, 29<sup>th</sup> January 1988, p. 2.; Mike Prestage, 'Metro Critics ditch Lords petition after pledge', *Evening Post*, 5<sup>th</sup> February 1988, p. 3.; Avon County Council, Report of the Avon Light Rail Transit Special Committee – Avon Light Rail Transit Bill – Interim Progress report, 4<sup>th</sup> February 1988, p. 2-3., ACC/M/PHT/ALRT/820, Bristol Archives.

<sup>187</sup> Bristol City Council, Minutes of a meeting of the ATA subcommittee, 27<sup>th</sup> April 1988 p. 1., M/BCC/ATA/1, Bristol Archives.; Report of the Avon Light Rail Transit Special Committee, 22<sup>nd</sup> June 1988, p. 2., ACC/M/PHT/ALRT/820, Bristol Archives.

<sup>188</sup> Bristol City Council, Minutes of a meeting of the ATA subcommittee, 26<sup>th</sup> February 1988 p. 1-3., M/BCC/ATA/1, Bristol Archives.; Bristol City Council, Minutes of a meeting of the ATA subcommittee, 27<sup>th</sup> April 1988 p. 1., M/BCC/ATA/1, Bristol Archives.; Joint Report of the City Clerk, City Planning Officer and City Valuer, 27<sup>th</sup> April 1988, p. 1-2., M/BCC/ATA/1, Bristol Archives.; Bristol City Council, Minutes of a meeting of the ATA subcommittee, 10<sup>th</sup> February 1988, Appendix – Questions to be asked of Advanced Transport for Avon Limited (ATA) regarding its proposals for the Avon Metro network, p. 1. – p. 14. M/BCC/ATA/1, Bristol Archives.

<sup>189</sup> Bristol City Council, Minutes of a meeting of the ATA subcommittee, 13<sup>th</sup> October 1988, p. 2., M/BCC/ATA/1, Bristol Archives.; Bristol City Council, Minutes of a meeting of the ATA subcommittee, 27<sup>th</sup> April 1988 p. 1., M/BCC/ATA/1, Bristol Archives.; Bristol City Council, Minutes of a meeting of the ATA subcommittee, 15<sup>th</sup> May 1988, p. 1., M/BCC/ATA/1, Bristol Archives.; Bristol City Council, Minutes of a meeting of the ATA subcommittee, 9<sup>th</sup> June 1988, p. 1., M/BCC/ATA/1, Bristol Archives.

It would take until March 1989 for the City Council to finally withdraw its petition following agreement with ATA to lease the trackbed into the city centre at a peppercorn rent.<sup>190</sup> The act would achieve royal assent only two months after this, showing the extent the City Council had held up the bill.<sup>191</sup> Yet, despite the strength of opposition by the City Council, the procedure for private bills meant that the City Council was required to negotiate parliamentary undertakings, specific agreements over specific concerns, with ATA and could not block progress on the metro completely. ATA's recrafting of transport governance meant that the local authorities could not stop the project on principle. They had to negotiate for ATA to accept a concern and agree to manage that concern; something that the local authorities, which had long held power over transport policy, now had to recognise and adapt to.

ATA's recrafting of transport governance between 1987 and 1989 was, therefore, ultimately successful in achieving the passage of the first Avon Light Rail Transit Act through Parliament. Using private bills meant that, whilst objections could be made to specific areas of a bill where there was a concern, ATA could negotiate parliamentary undertakings to deal with the complaint. Objections were based on either a concern over lack of consultation, caused by the short time span before ATA were required to submit the first bill, or by ideological opposition to the nature of the project and its impact on local governance in the region. These negotiations between the company and the council, however, delayed the passage of the bill, and added costs but could not stop the bill completely. This showed that whilst ATA's recrafting of transport governance was successful, those in opposition could make this process expensive by making negotiations protracted. The County Council came to see the

---

<sup>190</sup> Bristol City Council, Minutes of a meeting of the ATA subcommittee, 13<sup>th</sup> October 1988, p. 2., M/BCC/ATA/1, Bristol Archives.

<sup>191</sup> Mike Prestage, 'Yes to the metro, say city chiefs', *Evening Post*, 17th March 1989, p. 1.; Michael Lord, 'It's go! Metro gets the big yes', *Evening Post*, 11<sup>th</sup> May 1989, p. 1.

project as the solution to ineffective financing, whilst the City Council, despite deep opposition, was unable to block the project. If ATA had more time before the submission of its first bill to consult, it could have faced less opposition from the county tier, but this would not have helped the attitude of the city tier which opposed the project on its neoliberal principles. Despite this, the new model that ATA had shown that private bills could be successfully pursued to give private enterprise the power to own and construct a metro system without the involvement of local government.

*The changing attitude towards the automobile and mobility in the urban centre and the development of Advanced Transport for Avon, 1986 – 1989.*

Between 1979 and 1985, Cottrell failed to persuade Avon County Council to adopt a metro system to solve congestion in Bristol. The council's answer to traffic congestion in the urban centre was to advocate for the construction of more road space.<sup>192</sup> Yet by 1986 attitudes towards the car began to shift. Both the City Council and County Council recognised the problems unmanaged proliferation of the automobile had caused and offered competing solutions. The City Council wanted greater pedestrianisation of the city's civic and entertainment centre, around the city cathedral and St Augustine's Parade, to improve the urban environment.<sup>193</sup> Andrew May, deputy leader of the council, argued that Bristol was now excessively dominated by the selfish use of the motorcar.<sup>194</sup> The County Council, meanwhile, proposed linking

---

<sup>192</sup> 'Metro? Cheaper by road', *Evening Post*, 10<sup>th</sup> November 1979, p. 2.

<sup>193</sup> Mike Prestage, 'Keep out the cars' – Labour drive for traffic ban in centre', *Evening Post*, 5<sup>th</sup> August 1986, p. 1.

<sup>194</sup> Mike Prestage, 'Keep out the cars' – Labour drive for traffic ban in centre', *Evening Post*, 5<sup>th</sup> August 1986, p. 1.

75 sets of traffic lights to a computer-controlled system. Warren Fowler, Chairman of the County Council's Planning, Highways and Transport Committee highlighted the need to manage traffic carefully to prevent gridlock with a similar system cutting rush hour delays by 50% in Southampton.<sup>195</sup>

Neither plan offered a comprehensive solution to the city's traffic problems and as a result Cottrell resurrected the idea of a metro as a third option to solve the problem of traffic in the urban centre. This section explores how attitudes to the automobile developed in response to the Avon Metro in this period. It also explores how the metro concept itself evolved to provide a more feasible solution to Bristol's traffic problems and how other alternatives to the car started to develop in turn as a result of the idea of the metro concept looking like it could be fulfilled.

By 1986, British cities started to imitate German approaches to mitigate the impact of the car in the urban centre. This included the improvement of public transportation, the expansion of pedestrianised areas and cycling routes, and restriction of car use in the urban centre.<sup>196</sup> Yet these ideas were adopted slower and on a more limited scale in the United Kingdom when compared to Germany, whilst cycling remained hardly visible in British policy discourse.<sup>197</sup> This was replicated in Bristol. The City Council's pedestrianisation proposals were limited to a small section of the city centre and eventually reduced in scope. The provision of bus-only routes in the city extended to a small area around the main shopping quarter and was not replicated elsewhere.<sup>198</sup> Plans were formulated to restrict on-street parking and resist

---

<sup>195</sup> Mike Prestage, 'Car Chaos could be halved', *Evening Post*, 23<sup>rd</sup> June 1988, p. 5.; Mike Prestage, 'City centre car ban plan is a shocker', *Evening Post*, 6th August 1986, p. 3.

<sup>196</sup> John Pucher, 'Urban transport in Germany: Providing feasible alternatives to the car', *Transport Reviews*, 18-4 (1998), 286.

<sup>197</sup> Carman Hass – Klau, 'Impact of pedestrianization and traffic calming on retailing – A review of the evidence from Germany and the UK', *Transport Policy*, 1 (1993), 28.; Rachel Aldred, (2012), 96 - 97.

<sup>198</sup> Mike Prestage, 'Buses set for 'traffic free' route', *Evening Post*, 25th April 1988, p. 3.

calls to increase road space but this was not implemented widely.<sup>199</sup> One of the few successes for cycling during this period was the opening of the Bristol and Path Railway Path, constructed along the route of a disused railway line that linked the two cities. This was, however, the work of a local cycling advocacy group and not part of any national or local strategy. It was clear that attitudes were beginning to change between 1986 and 1989 with a growing focus on weighing the advantages of personal mobility against land requirements, the damage to the urban environment and the pollution cars caused.<sup>200</sup> Yet there was not a comprehensive plan to implement change decisively or on a large scale and progress continued at a slower pace than in German cities. The Avon Metro was positioned by Cottrell as a much more effective and comprehensive plan to improve the urban environment on a scale that neither council appeared able to achieve.

After the initial launch in 1986, ATA refined its plans were refined over the course of a year with the company changing the mode of the system from underground railway a street-running tramway.<sup>201</sup> This was, as previous described, based primarily on reducing the overall cost of the system, building on developments in Manchester and London.<sup>202</sup> Tramways also had other benefits and became the preferred solution in the 1980s for large transportation projects in big cities. They improved air quality, being electrically run, and they provided mobility links and opportunities for regeneration, being relatively easy to extend to redevelopment sites at a lower cost

---

<sup>199</sup> David Baxter, 'Traffic that puts Bristol in a big jam', *Evening Post*, 30<sup>th</sup> November 1988, p. 6-7.

<sup>200</sup> David Baxter, 'Traffic that puts Bristol in a big jam', *Evening Post*, 30<sup>th</sup> November 1988, p. 6-7.

<sup>201</sup> Michael Lord, '£350m Metro is back in town', *Evening Post*, 10<sup>th</sup> November 1986, p. 3.; Michael Lord, 'Metro makes tracks for Avon Rail future', *Evening Post*, 20<sup>th</sup> November 1986, p. 1.; 'Euro-MP in £300m boost for Metro', *Western Daily Press*, 10<sup>th</sup> November 1986, p. 1.; Michael Lord, 'The Supertram gathers pace', *Evening Post*, 28<sup>th</sup> October 1987, p. 6.

<sup>202</sup> Ogden & Senior, (1991), p. 4-5.; Green, (2016), p. 220 & p. 222.

than fully segregated, underground, systems.<sup>203</sup> Trams were also held in a higher esteem by the travelling public than buses, resulting in a 'tram bonus' which encouraged greater ridership.<sup>204</sup> Jack Penrose, elaborated on the reasons for the changing shift to trams: 'in Manchester, there was a feeling that the one way that should be pursued would be a tram system because that, in a sense, bridged between rail and car and movement and high capacity in pre-determined routes'.<sup>205</sup> This new generation of trams were able to provide high capacity alternatives to the car directly into the city centre, and were capable of swift travel to the suburbs via existing railway routes. Something which buses were unable to do.

In his interview with the *Evening Post* on the 28<sup>th</sup> October 1987, Cottrell highlighted the benefits of trams: 'we are bringing back the tram, no, we are reinventing the tram. Ours will be clean, pollution-free, quiet, comfortable.... Supertrams!'.<sup>206</sup> Figure 9., released the day of this interview shows how ATA intended to integrate its trams within the local urban environment; taking road space from the automobile in the centre and providing a sleek new look to the city. Despite these benefits, however, by updating the metro proposals to reflect contemporary thinking on metro systems, ATA had left too little time between announcement and submission of the first bill for the differences between modes to be evaluated by the authorities.<sup>207</sup> Additionally, groups such as Bristol Civic Society, supportive of the idea of an underground, now turned against the project. Members of the society wrote letters and contributed opinion pieces to the local media, and organised hostile public meetings on the

---

<sup>203</sup> I.A. Souter, 'An analysis of the development of the tramway/light rail concept in the British Isles', *Proceedings of the Institution of Mechanical Engineers*, 215 (2001), 163.

<sup>204</sup> T Bunschoten, E.J.E. Molin & R. Van Nes, 'Tram or Bus: Does the Tram Bonus Exist', *European Transport Conference Paper (2013)*, 16.

<sup>205</sup> Interview with Jack Penrose p. 3.

<sup>206</sup> Michael Lord, 'The Supertram gathers pace', *Evening Post*, 28<sup>th</sup> October 1987, p. 6.

<sup>207</sup> Michael Lord, 'The Metro starts its long journey', *Evening Post*, 19<sup>th</sup> November 1987, p. 16.

proposals.<sup>208</sup> Jack Penrose reflected on these, calling them ‘the first time ever in my life I've been shouted down at a public meeting and called a liar and all sorts of things’.<sup>209</sup> This highlighted the organisation of vocal opposition groups to the metro. Whilst previous studies of the metro have focused on the controversial elements of financing and governance, none have identified the change in mode in being a significant factor in creating opposition to the project. This showed that there was significant opposition and resistance to changing the surface layout of the city as Bristol Civic Society had been happy to support a public transport system that was ‘hidden’ beneath the streets but opposed a tramway that would ‘annex’ road space from the automobile. This showed the limitations as to how far it was acceptable to redesign the city away from the car at this point.

The proposed use of railway lines around the city brought other problems. With increasing congestion on the roads, long-abandoned railway lines around the city had started to increase in value as potential traffic-free routes, but there were different ideas on what these should be used for. One example was the Portishead Line, the focus of the first bill. The City Council saw the potential of using this route to connect its dock at Portbury with the national rail network. The proximity of this is shown in figure 10., with ATA’s proposed route to Portishead shown as a dashed line and the spur required to connect this route to the docks shown as a thin black line beyond Pill. The City Council had held the right to use this route for sixteen years and not done so but used this as another opportunity to block progress on the metro.<sup>210</sup> After railway

---

<sup>208</sup> James C. Briggs, ‘Rail link must go under city’, *Letter to the Evening Post*, 11<sup>th</sup> August 1987, p. 13.; David Baxter, ‘Metro: Give us the facts’, *Evening Post*, 18<sup>th</sup> November 1987, p. 1.; Lawrence Trackman, ‘Avon metro: Why we’re worried’, *Development Director of the Bristol Civic Society – Opinion Piece in the Evening Post*, 18<sup>th</sup> November 1987, p. 7.; Michael Lord, ‘Cottrell accuses Metro critics’, *Evening Post*, 19<sup>th</sup> November 1987, p. 3.

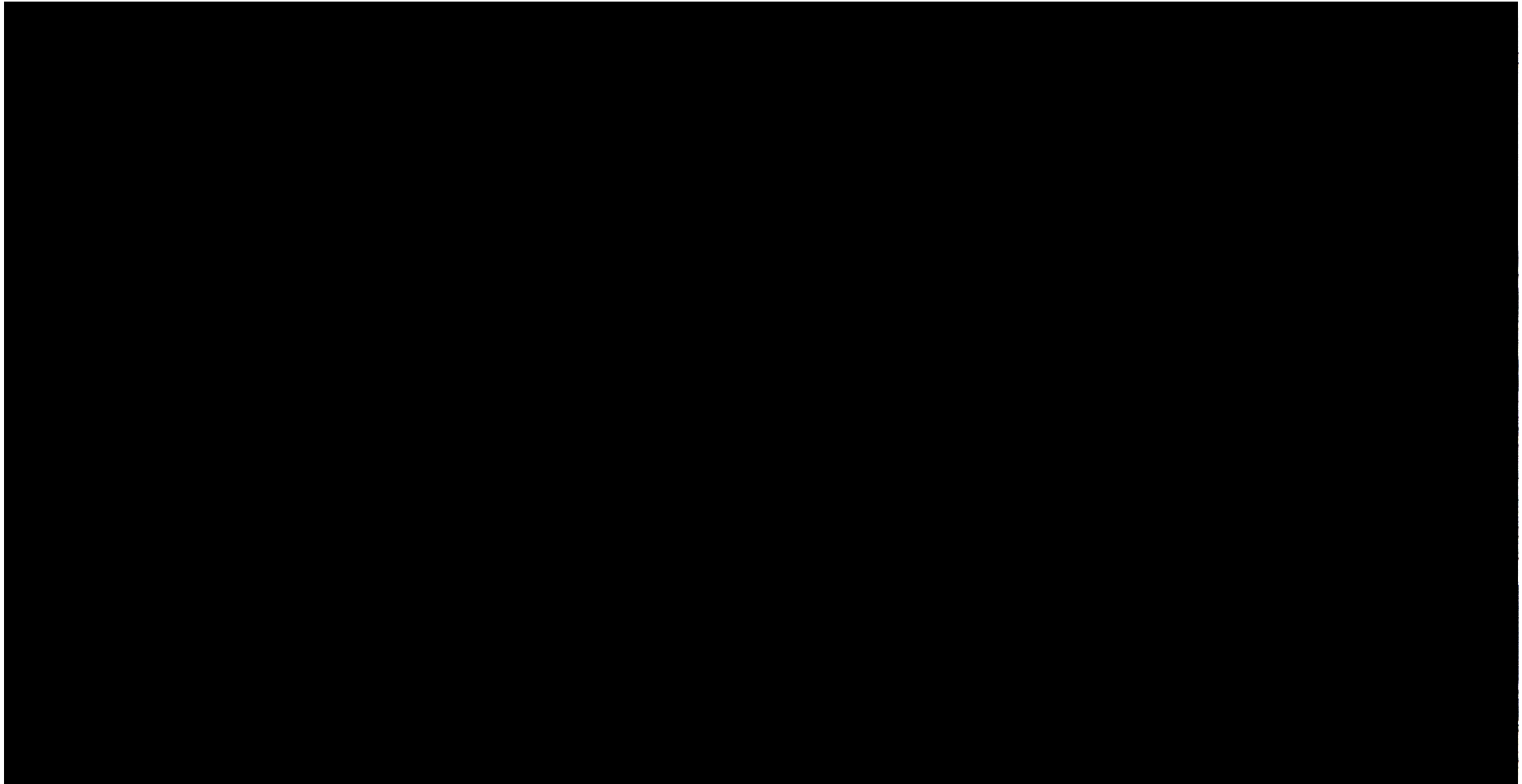
<sup>209</sup> Interview with Jack Penrose p. 29.

<sup>210</sup> Nigel Heath & Andrew White, ‘Port bid to sink the Metro’, 11<sup>th</sup> November 1987, p. 3.; Michael Lord, ‘More trouble on Metro Line’, *Evening Post*, 13<sup>th</sup> November 1987, p. 11.



routes had been closed, it was left to the local authorities to decide whether to protect these routes or not. Often these were just left disused, overgrown and abandoned but now their value in providing a traffic-free alternative route into the city centre was beginning to be understood. Yet, with no masterplan to look after and protect these assets, however, conflict emerged over different ideas for the use of these routes. Yet this event did form the basis of using an alternative to the road in the region to transport goods to be taken seriously in reaction to the metro concept.

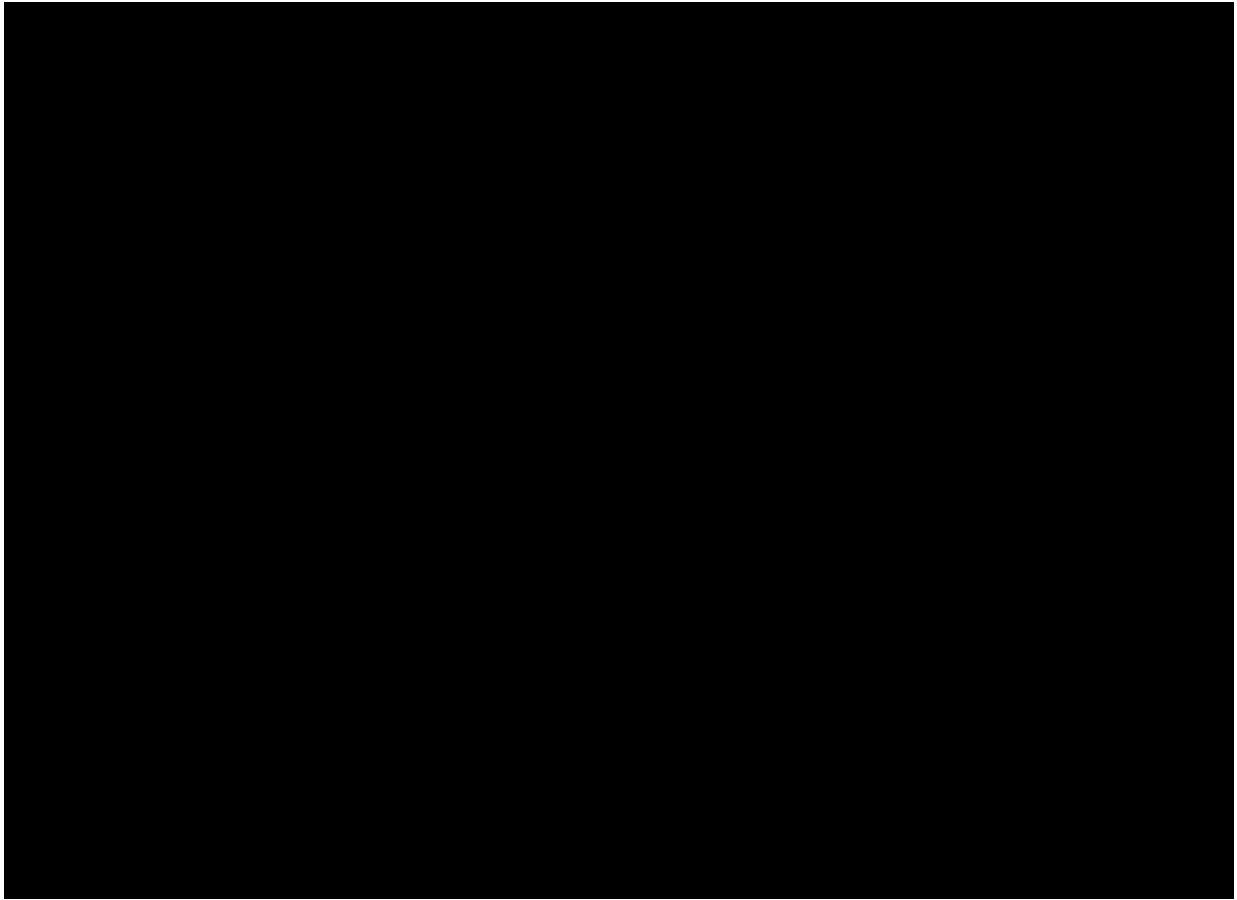
*Figure. 9. Artist's impression - Advanced Transport for Avon Supertram and integration in the city centre.<sup>211</sup>*



---

<sup>211</sup> Advanced Transport for Avon, 'Supertram', [online] available at: <https://clarenugentdesignblog.files.wordpress.com/2013/03/shipshape.jpg> accessed 24th December 2017.

*Figure. 10. The Portishead Line.*<sup>212</sup>



ATA eventually came to an agreement with the City Council to use the Portishead line and offered to upgrade it to handle both passenger and freight traffic as a compromise.<sup>213</sup> Disagreements with both the City Council and the Bristol Civic Society however had shown how ideas to provide alternatives to the car along segregated routes were forced to fight for precedence with each other and were deemed to be a lower priority than reducing space for the automobile in the city centre.

---

<sup>212</sup> Adapted from: Portishead Railway Group, 'Map of the Portishead Line', [online] available at: <http://www.portisheadrailwaygroup.org/maps.html> accessed 21th December 2017.

<sup>213</sup> Nigel Heath, 'Port backs down over metro', *Evening Post*, 12<sup>th</sup> April 1988, p. 2.

In summary, during this time there was a growing realisation that something had to be done about the problem of the car by both tiers of local government in the region. The plans presented, however, were not ambitious or comprehensive enough when compared to what cities in Germany were doing and caused disagreements between tiers. In reaction, the Avon Metro proposals of 1979 were repackaged and presented, once again, as the solution to the city's traffic problems and as a radical concept to promote regeneration. ATA adapted the proposals from an underground railway to street-running tramway, to lower the cost once again taking inspiration from other systems and provided greater capacity and speed than a bus network. This late change in mode provided problems as the tiers of local government were left with a short amount of time to assess the impact of this change. This led to petitions of objection in Parliament to the bill. Conflict also arose over exactly what disused railway lines should be used for, with a lack of plans for their use and imagination over their potential. There was also conflict caused by the proposals for the metro to take space from the automobile in the urban centre. Yet by 1989, unrestrained dominance of the car in the urban centre was starting to break down through attempts by both tiers to mitigate the impact of the car, but this process was slowed down by the continued poor structures in the region.

## *Conclusions from Chapter Two*

This chapter examined the recrafting of transport governance along neoliberal principles by ATA and its implementation between 1986 and 1989. It also examined how attitudes towards the car were starting to change during this period. In doing so it identifies key developments to add to historical scholarship.

In the context of a growing realisation of the impact of the motorcar on the city centre, a lack of funding and a lack of vision to create an effective solution to the problems of the car, the Avon Metro was once again presented as an alternative and more effective concept. Yet this time private finance would solve the issues of funding construction and a private company would provide the vision and leadership to implement it. As such, ATA presented an alternative model for transport governance that reused the methodology for the construction of Britain's original railway network – the use of private acts of parliament and combined it with a reduced role for local authorities. It also intended to make use of private finance in a way that built on the developing neoliberal agenda and the promotion of the free-market as the provider rather than the state. This resulted in a unique expression of neoliberalism which surpassed the government's current policies. Whereas the UDCs would reduce the role of the local authorities and provided the basis for regeneration, they were still appointed by central government. ATA sought to promote regeneration without any involvement from central or local government aside from the passing of the private acts. In this sense the project validates Brenner and Theodore's assertion that neoliberalism depends on what has gone before for it as this was a reaction to a local problem.

Opposition to the project came from opposition to central government policies that promoted neoliberalism. The City Council therefore found several opportunities to resist this agenda based on ideology and not necessarily on concept. An example being resistance for use of the Portishead Line despite the council holding the power to use this themselves for over 16 years and not doing so. Yet, despite this opposition, ATA was able to prove within this period that this new concept for transport governance that broke away from the restrictive structures of government and lack of funding could be successful. This can be seen through the gaining of permission for the first stage of the project. With developers willing to regenerate the area of Portishead Power Station and pay for the development of the metro as part of this regeneration a more advanced form of neoliberalism was on the verge of being successful that went beyond what the UDCs intended to do by handing more control for regeneration over to private finance and reducing the role of local government without central government involvement.

ATA refined its concept to a street-running tramway system in the city centre to reduce the costs that construction of an underground tunnel would entail. This reflected a trend seen in other cities. Yet this change caused groups such as the Bristol Civic Society to complain about a public transport system that would run on the surface and compete for road space with the automobile. This showed that there was still strong resistance against a concept that would compete with the automobile with the preference being for a public transport system that remain 'hidden'. This showed the continued support for the dominance of the car. Additionally, the use of the Portishead Line became a fight over who should be allowed to use this route as opposed to cooperation and shared use between ATA and the Council for mutual benefit. This showed how the automobile still maintained dominance in the transport network of the city at this time.

## Chapter Three

### The fall: The second bill and the bankruptcy and demise of Advanced Transport for Avon, May 1989 – March 1992

Despite opposition between 1986 and 1989, ATA had been successful in navigating the first Avon Light Rail Transit Act through parliament, it gaining royal assent in May 1989.<sup>214</sup> ATA had reflected and built upon the neoliberal restructuring of the economy under Thatcher to take concepts such as the minimal state, private ownership of the means of production and the importance of the market even further than had been achieved previously. As such, ATA was pioneering a method of urban regeneration that would be achieved financially and politically independent of central government policy unlike the Urban Development Corporations which required central government funding in their set-up. ATA therefore recrafted transport governance and providing a road map to the greater implementation of neoliberalism.

Before construction could begin, ATA required a second act to secure rights to run through the city centre. This would make the project viable forming the basis of a working metro system with a cross-city link and would be the most critical and technically challenging part of the project. Between 1989 and 1992, ATA would be able to avoid the strong political opposition faced previously. The company learnt that completely excluding the local authorities created tensions and sought a more collaborative approach with both tiers of local government. This process had already begun before the passage of the first bill with ATA and the County Council working together on the design of the city centre section of the route.<sup>215</sup> With weakening political opposition to ATA, there was the opportunity for the metro to finally be realised.

---

<sup>214</sup> Michael Lord, 'It's go! Metro gets the big yes', *Evening Post*, 11<sup>th</sup> May 1989, p. 1.

<sup>215</sup> David Baxter, 'Is the metro a bad bet?', *Evening Post*, 27<sup>th</sup> April 1989, p. 4.

Other challenges emerged. Cottrell failed to secure re-election to his European Parliament seat having been arrested shortly before the election for refusing to wear his seatbelt on an aircraft.<sup>216</sup> He subsequently resigned as Chairman of ATA within a year resulting in the company losing its frontman.<sup>217</sup> Economic conditions also deteriorated with the start of a recession and a housing slump that threatened to delay the developments that ATA hoped to raise financing from.<sup>218</sup> Delays in passing the first act had already made ATA's investors nervous about how long it would take to see a return on their investment and further delays had the potential for them to withdraw backing.<sup>219</sup> ATA also faced new opponents as the project sought permission to run through the urban centre. Many more people and groups became affected by the project and, as a result, the number of petitions increased. A sustained campaign was led by the cycling advocacy group Cyclebag to protect the Bristol to Bath Railway Path, which ATA intended to obtain powers to run the metro over.<sup>220</sup> The metro also faced other private companies seeking to replicate its model with competing plans to tackle congestion in the city. One of these, Guided Light Transit (GLT), a guided bus proposal led by the local bus company, Badgerline, offered a metro system with similar benefits at a much-reduced cost.<sup>221</sup>

---

<sup>216</sup> Michael Lord, 'Green light for Labour', *Evening Post*, 19<sup>th</sup> June 1989, p.1.; Michael Lord, 'Cottrell: My arrest', *Evening Post*, 25<sup>th</sup> May 1989, p. 1.

<sup>217</sup> Bruno Clements, 'Cottrell decision 'the key to metro future'', *Evening Post*, 3<sup>rd</sup> February 1990, p. 2.; David Baxter, 'Flower power metro wants a green for go', *Evening Post*, 18<sup>th</sup> May 1988, p. 4.

<sup>218</sup> Christopher Dow, *Major Recessions: Britain and the World 1920-1995*, (Oxford: UK, 2000), p. 362.; Mike Prestage, 'Go slow, builders ordered', *Evening Post*, 1<sup>st</sup> June 1989, p. 1.; Roy Heelas, 'Housing slump costs the Pru £25m', *Evening Post*, 14<sup>th</sup> September 1989, p. 27.; Jeremy Brien, 'Counting the cost – Lawson defends interest rate rise', *Evening Post*, 6<sup>th</sup> October 1989, p. 1.; Jeremy Brien, 'Gloomy warning of British slump – Forecast by brokers', *Evening Post*, 26<sup>th</sup> October 1989, p. 26.

<sup>219</sup> Bruno Clements, 'Metro backers in pull-out threat', *Evening Post*, 19<sup>th</sup> October 1989, p. 2.

<sup>220</sup> David Baxter, 'Metro squares up to 58 protesters', *Evening Post*, 7<sup>th</sup> February 1990, p. 3.; 'Cyclists aim to put spokes in the metro's wheels', *Evening Post*, 8<sup>th</sup> February 1990, p. 5.; David Baxter, 'Metro II – The fight for Land', *Evening Post*, 31<sup>st</sup> May 1989, p. 8.

<sup>221</sup> Nigel Dando, 'Return of the city trams', *Evening Post*, 6<sup>th</sup> September 1991, p. 1.



This final chapter examines the development of ATA from May 1989 to its eventual failure in March 1992. It explores how its new model of neoliberal transport governance and financing came to be accepted by both tiers of local government but would ultimately not be implemented and the reasons for this.<sup>222</sup> This chapter also examines how changing attitudes towards the car and the debate on mobility in the city which ATA created eventually acted as a catalyst for new transport developments in the city up to 1992 which contributed towards its demise.

*The acceptance of the new structure of neoliberal transport governance and the limitations of this structure, 1989 – 1992.*

In November 1989, ATA deposited its next two bills in Parliament simultaneously, making up for time lost in the passage of the first act. The first bill for running powers in the city centre – the Avon Light Rail Transit (Bristol City Centre Bill), the second for powers to extend the system towards the fringe towns of Yate and Bradley Stoke – the Avon Light Rail Transit Bill no.2.<sup>223</sup> The routes of these bills are shown in figure 7. The City Council once again threatened to lodge petitions of objection in Parliament to both bills, continuing the ideological fight against neoliberal projects also shown by its continued opposition to a UDC in the city.<sup>224</sup> Primarolo continued to argue that the system would face a funding crisis and that there were no government grants available to support the project when it would inevitably struggle.<sup>225</sup>

---

<sup>222</sup> Nigel Dando and Ian Onions, 'Death of metro dream', *Evening Post*, 11<sup>th</sup> March 1992, p. 11.

<sup>223</sup> David Baxter, 'Key stage of the city Metro project launched', *Evening Post*, 27<sup>th</sup> November 1989, p. 1.

<sup>224</sup> Roger Burton, 'MP hits at 'hostile' exhibition', *Evening Post*, 21<sup>st</sup> August 1989, p. 5.; Bruno Clements, 'Metro's progress is under threat', *Evening Post*, 16<sup>th</sup> October 1989, p. 9.; Bristol City Council, Minutes of a meeting of the Advanced Transport for Avon Sub-Committee, 25<sup>th</sup> May 1990, p. 3., M/BCC/ATA/1, Bristol Archives.

<sup>225</sup> David Baxter, 'Metro in line for cash crisis, claims MP', *Evening Post*, 13<sup>th</sup> September 1989, p. 9.

ATA attempted to change this narrative, having learnt from complaints of a lack of consultation on the first bill. It offered both the City Council and County Council joint venture agreements in October 1989 allowing greater involvement in decision-making on the metro and an interest in the company.<sup>226</sup> This modified the model away from operating independently of the local authorities in the region and towards closer involvement with them. The County Council signed an agreement, subsequently undertaking study work and seconding council employees to work with ATA.<sup>227</sup> The City Council, however, refused to sign arguing that it would not have any opportunity to contribute meaningfully to the project due to not having any powers over transport policy in the region. It voted instead to block progress on the City Centre Bill citing a lack of information supplied.<sup>228</sup> This showed the problems in Avon's structure whereby the power to address the city's transport interests lay with the County Council, not the City Council and a private company had now gaining more influence and power over the direction of transport planning than the City Council, a body elected to represent the citizens of the city. Additionally the City Council refused to engage with this company despite attempts to involve it arguing it had not received enough information about the project. This highlighted that opposition was about ideology and not solving concerns about the metro as a concept. It looked like the beginning of another attritional fight with the City Council.

---

<sup>226</sup> David Baxter, 'Councils are offered metro link-up', *Evening Post*, 30<sup>th</sup> October 1989, p. 2.

<sup>227</sup> 'MPs to decide on City Metro', *Evening Post*, 23<sup>rd</sup> October 1991, p. 14.; David Baxter, 'New fears of Metro funding', *Evening Post*, 19<sup>th</sup> September 1991, p. 16.

<sup>228</sup> David Baxter, Bruno Clements and Ian Onions, 'Metro boss raps Labour hold-up', *Evening Post*, 13<sup>th</sup> December 1989, p. 3.; 'Metro decision still stopped in its tracks', *Evening Post*, 3<sup>rd</sup> January 1990, p. 2.; Bristol City Council, Minutes of a meeting of the Advanced Transport for Avon Sub-Committee, 6<sup>th</sup> September 1990, p. 4., M/BCC/ATA/1, Bristol Archives.

Suddenly, on 6<sup>th</sup> January 1990, City Councillors voted to lift opposition to the metro.<sup>229</sup> Yet within days, opposition to the metro was reinforced by a vote in the DLP following a meeting that passed with a majority of one.<sup>230</sup> Deep divisions were forming within the DLP about how to approach the metro. The Bennite dominance of the DLP had been loosened by internal party elections in 1989 which had shifted power towards moderates resulting in a sharp split in the DLP.<sup>231</sup> Even stern critics of ATA, such as Andrew May, began to accept the role of private finance in the provision of public transportation in Bristol. When opposition was re-imposed by the DLP, he resigned as deputy leader of the council citing the need to reach a compromise agreement with ATA.<sup>232</sup>

In March 1990, the DLP finally ended its block on the progress of the bills through Parliament. This allowed greater consultation between the City Council and ATA.<sup>233</sup> Following this, the DLP changed its attitude towards neoliberal projects in Bristol. This resulted in the City Council negotiating a deal to privatise the Port of Bristol, dropping its fight against the UDC's attempt to build a new spine road across its development site and forging a new partnership with the UDC after three years of bitter opposition in addition to dropping plans to petition against the metro.<sup>234</sup> Primarolo also ceased public statements of opposition to the project. This development reflected the movement of the Labour Party nationally, which had begun to move towards the political centre ground following the general election of 1987. Whilst this process was

---

<sup>229</sup> Bruno Clements and Kevan Blackadder, 'Metro back on the rails', *Evening Post*, 6th January 1990, p. 1.

<sup>230</sup> Bruno Clements, 'Labour hits new snag on metro bid', *Evening Post*, 9th January 1990, p. 11.

<sup>231</sup> Michael Lord, 'The bitter doubts that dogged the left', *Evening Post*, 10th January 1990, p. 2.

<sup>232</sup> Bruno Clements, 'Metro dream is derailed', *Evening Post*, 10th January 1990, p. 1.

<sup>233</sup> 'Move to end vital Metro block', *Evening Post*, 19th January 1990, p. 3.; Bruno Clements, 'New hope for metro in Labour re-think', *Evening Post*, 1st February 1990, p. 2.; Bruno Clements, 'Cottrell decision 'the key to metro future'', *Evening Post*, 3rd February 1990, p. 2.; David Baxter, 'Metro hope as Dawn is snubbed', *Evening Post*, 28th March 1990, p. 3.; Bruno Clements, 'Broken promise' rap as new metro row flares', *Evening Post*, 13th September 1990, p. 7.

<sup>234</sup> Dennis Payter, 'Docks set for multi-million pound 'jackpot'', *Evening Post*, 19th February 1991, p. 2.; Dennis Payter, 'Go-ahead for £92m take-over at Docks', *Evening Post*, 9th April 1991, p. 2.; Lorna Duckworth, 'Council drops spine road fight', *Evening Post*, 27th February 1991, p. 2.; Lorna Duckworth, 'Council drops metro threat', *Evening Post*, 12th March 1991, p. 2.; Vincent Moss, 'Hopes of new era as row ends', 5th February 1992, p. 11.

virtually complete by 1989, the dominance of Bennites in the Bristol DLP had delayed this process locally to 1990.<sup>235</sup> Political opposition to the metro had now receded due to this but other threats to the project had already started to emerge from 1989 with the beginning of an economic recession.

In October 1989 Brian Tucker had warned that any further delays to the metro bills could result in the metro's financial backers pulling out of the project.<sup>236</sup> Even with the City Council removing its opposition to the project in March 1990, ATA faced a total of fifty-eight petitions of objections to the bills in Parliament.<sup>237</sup> The first act, had only affected the two councils and British Rail due to the Portishead Line running through the Avon Gorge where there were no homes or businesses. The petitions for the next stage, however, were due to the project seeking permission to run through the city centre and the densely populated suburbs. Petitions were lodged by residents, businesses and local influence groups as a result. ATA was required to consult with each petitioner and agree parliamentary undertakings individually over concerns; delaying the progress of the metro bills through Parliament and adding further costs.<sup>238</sup> Additional problems emerged as the unfolding economic recession of the late 1980s particularly hit the housing market and the West of England.<sup>239</sup> This resulted in, developers being less eager to build property, which was how ATA had planned to

---

<sup>235</sup> Andrew Thorpe, (2015), p. 227 - 233.

<sup>236</sup> Bruno Clements, 'Metro backers in pull-out threat', *Evening Post*, 19<sup>th</sup> October 1989, p. 2.

<sup>237</sup> Roger Burton, 'City farm fight over land bid for metro', *Evening Post*, 29<sup>th</sup> January 1990, p. 14.; David Baxter, 'Metro squares up to 58 protesters', *Evening Post*, 7<sup>th</sup> February 1990, p. 3.; David Baxter, 'Metro blow as protest groups line up', *Evening Post*, 9<sup>th</sup> February 1990, p. 5.

<sup>238</sup> David Baxter, 'Metro timetable is put back for more talks', *Evening Post*, 13<sup>th</sup> October 1990, p. 2.; 'Metro in new delay', *Evening Post*, 4<sup>th</sup> December 1990, p. 6.

<sup>239</sup> Dow, (2000), p. 362.; Mike Prestage, 'Go slow, builders ordered', *Evening Post*, 1<sup>st</sup> June 1989, p. 1.; Roy Heelas, 'Housing slump costs the Pru £25m', *Evening Post*, 14<sup>th</sup> September 1989, p. 27.; Jeremy Brien, 'Counting the cost – Lawson defends interest rate rise', *Evening Post*, 6<sup>th</sup> October 1989, p. 1.; Jeremy Brien, 'Gloomy warning of British slump – Forecast by brokers', *Evening Post*, 26<sup>th</sup> October 1989, p. 26.

raise the finances to construct the system using planning gain.<sup>240</sup> ATA now had to adapt its plans to raise finances to construct the metro.

ATA announced in September 1989 that it was applying for a government grant to aid construction of the metro.<sup>241</sup> By May 1990, ATA estimated it would need £150million in government funding, between 60 and 65 percent of the cost of the overall system. The City and County Council's estimated this would need to be closer to 90%.<sup>242</sup> The application for a grant in 1989 had been encouraged by Transport Junior Minister, Michael Portillo, but this completely undermined the concept of the Avon Metro being a 'free-gift' to the city of Bristol.<sup>243</sup>

These developments highlighted the limitations of ATA's new model of transport governance to secure funding from the private sector by capturing the increase in land values from the development of the metro. With companies not building developments due to the recession, ATA could not access funding from them. Developments would need to be of a large enough scale to cover the cost of construction which increased risk and attempts by ATA to forge close relations with developers had previously left the company open to accusations that it was a front for property speculators.<sup>244</sup> ATA also realised the need to have had a closer relationship, earlier on, with the planning tier of local government to obtain planning permission for large-scale developments as there was no guarantee that these types of developments would be approved. ATA's model was undermined by developers being unable to develop land through either lack of permission or demand due to the recession meaning ATA was unable to

---

<sup>240</sup> Dow, (2000), p. 362.; Mike Prestage, 'Go slow, builders ordered', *Evening Post*, 1<sup>st</sup> June 1989, p. 1.; Roy Heelas, 'Housing slump costs the Pru £25m', *Evening Post*, 14<sup>th</sup> September 1989, p. 27.; Jeremy Brien, 'Counting the cost – Lawson defends interest rate rise', *Evening Post*, 6<sup>th</sup> October 1989, p. 1.; Jeremy Brien, 'Gloomy warning of British slump – Forecast by brokers', *Evening Post*, 26<sup>th</sup> October 1989, p. 26.

<sup>241</sup> Ian Onions, 'Metro's 'bid for public money'', *Evening Post*, 28<sup>th</sup> September 1989, p. 8.

<sup>242</sup> Michael Lord and Kate Ironside, 'Metro cash U-turn shock', *Evening Post*, 24<sup>th</sup> May 1990, p. 1 - 2.

<sup>243</sup> Ian Onions, 'Metro's 'bid for public money'', *Evening Post*, 28<sup>th</sup> September 1989, p. 8.

<sup>244</sup> HC Deb 24<sup>th</sup> January 1989, vol. 145, col 957.

access funds. By changing strategy and applying for government funds to contribute towards construction, the amount developers would be expected to contribute towards the cost of the metro would be reduced. ATA hoped this would reduce the risk for developers and incentivise them to start developments and then contribute private finance to the project. The problem with this approach however was that the rules for government grants for transport infrastructure under the Transport Act, (1968) required the local authority to also contribute funding.<sup>245</sup> There was also no template for a private company receiving a transport infrastructure grant as this legislation was designed for where a local authority would be leading the construction of transport infrastructure, as was the case in Tyne and Wear and Manchester.

Despite hoping for support from the central government, in September 1991 the Secretary of State for Transport, Malcom Rifkind, announced that ATA would receive no government grant in the near future.<sup>246</sup> The dual problems of an economic recession meaning that developers were less likely to build and the failure to obtain a government grant, effectively cut off ATA's ability to raise finances to construct the system and, bar any miraculous new investors appearing, ATA was now in an impossible situation financially. ATA did keep promising that it was in talks with new investors, but by March 1992 the High Court ordered the company to be wound up.<sup>247</sup>

---

<sup>245</sup> House of Commons, Transport Committee: Urban public transport: the light rail option. Minutes of evidence May 1990 (HC 308-IV), (London: The Stationary Office, 1990), p. 15-16.

<sup>246</sup> Jeremy Brien, 'Minister's blow to metro hopes', *Evening Post*, 6<sup>th</sup> September 1991, p. 3.

<sup>247</sup> Vincent Moss, 'Metro 'saved' by cash offer' *Evening Post*, 17<sup>th</sup> January 1992, p. 2.; Lorna Duckworth, 'Metro hopes for US cash', *Evening Post*, 20<sup>th</sup> November 1991, p. 1-2.; Nigel Dando and Ian Onions, 'Death of a metro dream', *Evening Post*, 11<sup>th</sup> March 1992, p. 1 – 2.

ATA's financial problems caused two developments. First, the County Council, having adopted LRT as policy through the joint venture agreement and having paid for various studies towards a metro, now started to investigate bringing the project under its control in June 1991.<sup>248</sup> Whilst ATA refused to sell at this point, following its collapse Avon County Council took on remnants of the project and attempted to fund it using the same model used to construct the Manchester Metrolink, renaming the project 'the Westway'.<sup>249</sup> The second development was that a private bus company, Badgerline, announced in September 1991 a rival attempt to build a metro at a much reduced cost.<sup>250</sup> Its Guided Light Transit (GLT) system, consisting of a bus that could run on both normal roads and on a guided track where required, was estimated to cost £40million, a fraction of the cost of ATA.<sup>251</sup> Badgerline hoped that asking for a smaller government grant to support the construction of GLT would be more likely to be successful. Whilst initially insisting that GLT could complement ATA's proposals, GLT helped to hasten ATA's demise by offering similar advantages at a lower cost. It also gained support from local interest groups such as the Bristol Civic Society.<sup>252</sup> These developments showed that the idea of a metro was now accepted as a solution to Bristol's traffic problems but different methods to achieve this were now starting to be conceptualised.

---

<sup>248</sup> David Baxter, 'Secret scheme for the metro', *Evening Post*, 24<sup>th</sup> June 1991, p. 2.

<sup>249</sup> David Baxter, 'Cash row Metro Chief hits back', *Evening Post*, 26<sup>th</sup> June 1991, p. 1.; Bob Fowler, 'A Rapid Transit System for Bristol', 13<sup>th</sup> May 2003 [online] available at: <https://brlsi.org/events-proceedings/proceedings/18088> accessed 30<sup>th</sup> December 2017.

<sup>250</sup> Nigel Dando, 'Return of the city trams', *Evening Post*, 6<sup>th</sup> September 1991, p. 1.

<sup>251</sup> Nigel Dando, 'Return of the city trams', *Evening Post*, 6<sup>th</sup> September 1991, p. 1.

<sup>252</sup> Nigel Dando, 'Supertram hopes to be city guiding light', *Evening Post*, 16<sup>th</sup> September 1991, p. 5.; Nigel Dando, 'Civic group backs city trams move', *Evening Post*, 9<sup>th</sup> October 1991, p. 5.; Christine Alsford, 'Residents say 'yes' to supertram network', *Evening Post*, 13<sup>th</sup> November 1991, p. 6.; Vincent Moss, 'City's supertram gets vote of welcome', *Evening Post*, 28<sup>th</sup> November 1991, p. 27.; Nigel Dando, 'Tram' big gets civic backing', *Evening Post*, 3<sup>rd</sup> January 1992, p. 21.; Lorna Duckworth, 'Backing for city 'bendy bus'', *Evening Post*, 13<sup>th</sup> January 1992, p. 6.; 'Consultancy backs the bus', *Evening Post*, 25<sup>th</sup> January 1992, p. 9.; Fay Gould, 'New town votes for bendy buses', *Evening Post*, 17<sup>th</sup> February 1992, p. 5.

In summary, despite the weakening of political opposition to ATA during this period, the economic recession exposed the limitations of ATA's model of transport governance. The acceptance of the role private finance to help fund urban transport infrastructure and regeneration came too late for ATA. Delays caused by opposition to the metro by the DLP, and by extension, the City Council had stretched the company's funds. Whilst the onset of recession delayed developments intended to fund the construction of the system. Support from central government, which had wanted to see ATA's model succeed, also evaporated. The brief window where conditions could have allowed ATA to be successful had passed and the economic and political landscape had changed. Yet the metro had, for a moment, shown that a new model of transport governance, not led by the local authorities, could work with the passing of the first act. The experience from opposition led to ATA seeking greater involvement from both tiers of governance in the Avon region rather than attempting to completely by-pass these institutions. With this structure of co-operation and without the economic recession, this partnership could have successfully implemented a metro in the city and is similar to the model used to fund the 2020 Northern Line London Underground extension to Battersea.<sup>253</sup> Yet by opening transport governance to organisations outside of the local authorities, ATA faced competition from concepts that promised to achieve similar results at a much lower cost with the GLT proposals which also hastened ATA's demise showing another facet to introducing market forces into urban transport plans.

---

<sup>253</sup> Wandsworth Borough Council, 'Battersea power station scheme approved', 11<sup>th</sup> November 2010, [online] available at: [http://www.wandsworth.gov.uk/news/article/10136/battersea\\_power\\_station\\_scheme\\_approved](http://www.wandsworth.gov.uk/news/article/10136/battersea_power_station_scheme_approved) accessed 15th August 2018.



*Advanced Transport for Avon and the changing nature of mobility and  
automobility in the urban centre, 1989 – 1992.*

The idea of an Avon Metro had, by 1992, successfully opened debate in the city of Bristol about offering effective alternatives to the car and a better urban environment. This had resulted in a shift in policy towards the urban design of the city centre. City planners were beginning to change the design of the city so that the negative aspects of the car were mitigated, rather than supporting the 'predict and provide' model of road building. Increased pedestrianisation efforts, a concerted effort to implement bus lanes to encourage public transport, a new understanding of the role of cycling in urban transport as well as the adoption of LRT as County Council policy all reflected this. Despite ATA's failure, what can be considered its legacy was providing the environment for ideas of alternatives to the car to be presented, and, on occasion, implemented. This section examines the changing attitude towards mobility and the automobile within the urban centre and explores the role of ATA in these developments.

By 1992, many transport problems still existed in the city. This included the cost of implementing a large-scale public transportation system, the paucity of traffic-free routes for alternatives to the car and the continued dominance of the automobile. Yet there was now a proliferation of projects presented aimed at improving mobility, reducing the impact of the car and improving the urban environment because of the metro concept. These ranged from the fanciful: cable-cars, monorails and electronic tolling charges, to the more serious: guided buses, park and ride schemes, the implementation of a cycle network and the pedestrianisation of College Green and the

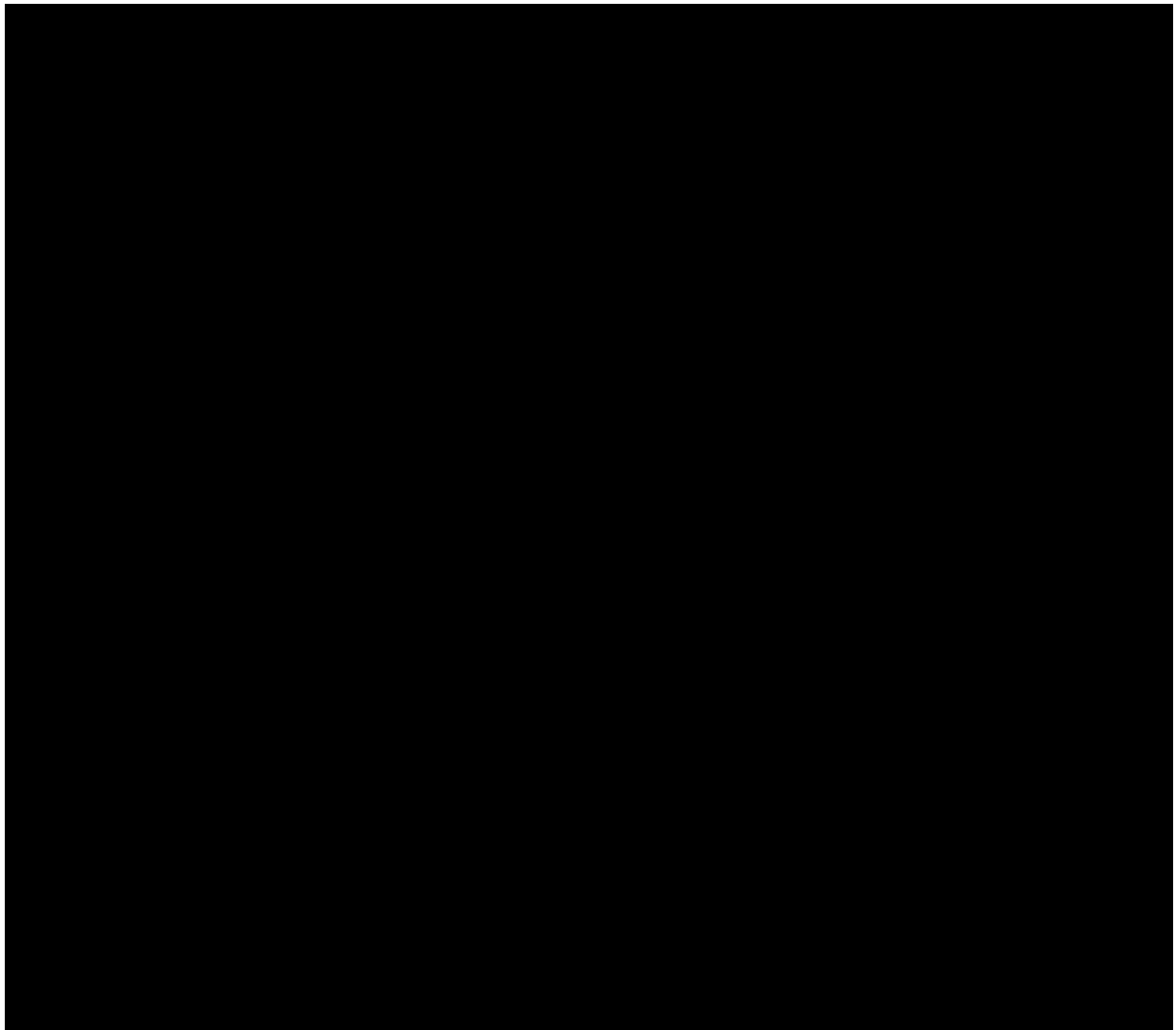
restoration of Queen Square.<sup>254</sup> The latter, the second largest Georgian Square in Europe, had had a dual carriageway constructed across it during the 1930s as part of the city's inner circuit road, as shown in figure 11. Its removal was now deemed 'repairing an act of civic vandalism' that had blighted one of the historic parts of the city.<sup>255</sup> This showed a growing realisation of the damage the car had done to the city's urban fabric.

---

<sup>254</sup> Roy Heelas, 'Here's the way to lift traffic headaches!', *Evening Post*, 4<sup>th</sup> March 1989, p. 5.; David Baxter, 'Monorail 'would be the answer'', *Evening Post*, 24<sup>th</sup> January 1984, p. 4.; David Baxter, 'Road pricing 'is way out of city jams'', *Evening Post*, 7<sup>th</sup> February 1991, p. 17.; David Baxter, 'Hi-tech way to ease city's traffic chaos', *Evening Post*, 11<sup>th</sup> February 1991, p. 10.; Nigel Dando, 'Return of the City Trams', *Evening Post*, 6<sup>th</sup> September 1991, p. 1.; Christine Alsford, 'Bus lane 'is set to ease congestion', *Evening Post*, 16<sup>th</sup> April 1991, p. 11.; Ian Onions, 'Park and Ride gets in gear', *Evening Post*, 27<sup>th</sup> April 1991, p. 1.

<sup>255</sup> David Baxter, 'Traffic Chaos is set to end on Green', *Evening Post*, 18<sup>th</sup> January 1991, p. 18.; Bruno Clements, 'Green light for big traffic shake-up', *Evening Post*, 19<sup>th</sup> February 1991, p. 5.; Anthony Dore, 'City Centre Jambusters', *Evening Post*, 2<sup>nd</sup> March 1991, p. 1.; David Harrison, 'Repairing an act of civic vandalism', *Evening Post*, 8<sup>th</sup> March 1991, p. 9.

*Figure. 11. Aerial photograph showing the Inner Circuit Road crossing Queen's Square.*<sup>256</sup>



The first new local plan for the city in 20 years drafted in the early 1990s sought to open-up the city centre to pedestrians and cyclists, reduce the impact of the car in the urban centre and introduce restrictions on parking to increase patronage of public transport.<sup>257</sup> Yate, the overspill town, finally received its railway station, showing an

---

<sup>256</sup> Paul Townsend, 'Looking down on Bristol', (1983) [Online], available at: <https://www.flickr.com/photos/brizzlebornandbred/2060946602/in/album-72157603269247760/> accessed 13<sup>th</sup> December 2017.

<sup>257</sup> Bruno Clements, 'Traffic hope for city under siege', *Evening Post*, 18<sup>th</sup> September 1989, p. 2.; David Baxter, 'Drivers face blitz on city traffic', *Evening Post*, 23<sup>rd</sup> July 1990, p. 2.; 'Cycle network gets into gear', *Evening Post*, 7<sup>th</sup> February 1992, p. 10.

increased awareness of the use of rail in the city's transport picture.<sup>258</sup> These developments came following the metro sparking debate about mobility and the problem of the automobile in the urban centre. The city's planners had become influenced by the same objectives of the metro of doing something about the unrestrained impact of the car. There were limitations to this. The only major road project proposed at this time, a £55million spine road across the Bristol Development site, quickly gained a £30million grant towards its construction. This showed that central government readily supported road projects but were more reticent in supporting concepts like the metro displaying how the dominance of the automobile was still strongly entrenched at the forefront of government decisions about transport infrastructure in the urban centre.<sup>259</sup>

An additional, major, and up to now, little understood impact of ATA on shifting attitudes towards mobility was its impact on cycling as a mode of transport. Until the early 1990s, cycling's position within UK transport policy discourse has been described as 'hardly visible'.<sup>260</sup> One of the few successes up to the mid-1980s being the construction of the Bristol to Bath Railway Path led by Cyclebag. The route, shown in figure 12, followed the route of the disused Bristol and Gloucester Railway line from the city centre towards the north east of the city, then followed the disused route of the Mangotsfield and Bath Branch Line to Bath. This provided a safe and segregated route connecting the two cities for walkers and cyclists away from traffic along a quiet, green path. Reusing this piece of disused railway infrastructure had also been included in plans for the Avon Metro from 1979 and was considered one of the key parts of the metro network for connections to Yate and Bath. As such, the route was included as

---

<sup>258</sup> Kevan Blackadder, 'Town gets ticket to ride', *Evening Post*, 11<sup>th</sup> May 1989, p. 1.

<sup>259</sup> David Baxter, 'It's the £60 million weir and road show...', *Evening Post*, 10<sup>th</sup> November 1990, p. 8.; David Baxter, 'Battle Lines drawn on BDC road site', *Evening Post*, 30<sup>th</sup> November 1990, p. 5.

<sup>260</sup> Rachel Aldred, (2012), 96 - 97.

part of the Avon Light Rail Transit Bill no.2. submitted in 1989. In reaction conflict emerged between ATA and Cyclebag over what this route should be used for, similar to conflict between ATA and the City Council over the use of the Portishead Line. The difference here was that the running rails had already been removed and a path installed in its place by volunteers. The subsequent battle over the Railway Path would help shape national attitudes towards cycling on how it could contribute to the transport policy of urban centres.

Cyclebag organised a sustained campaign to protect the Railway Path. The group's figurehead, Chris Hutt, argued that 'those of us who have worked for the last ten years to help create this popular path for cyclists and pedestrians are not about to sit back and watch our achievement disappear under the bulldozer of private commercial interests'.<sup>261</sup> ATA, meanwhile insisted that cyclists, walkers and trams could share the route as re-use of this infrastructure was the only affordable option. This showed how disused railway lines had increased in value resulting in conflict over different transport modes claiming the same resource. For Cyclebag this was about preserving the rights of cyclists and promoting the bicycle as a mode of transport. The group argued that sharing the path would destroy the route and ATA's proposals would result in difficulties accessing the path and were unsafe. It held concerns at plans for the Staple Hill tunnel, shown in figure 13, where cyclists would be forced to leave the path, cycle on busy roads and re-join the route after.<sup>262</sup> This would completely undermine the intention of providing a safe route for cyclists with

---

<sup>261</sup> Chris Hutt, secretary Cyclebag, *Letter to the Evening Post*, 3<sup>rd</sup> November 1987, p. 11.; Judith Pike, 'Riders let off steam over the metro', *Evening Post*, 25<sup>th</sup> July 1987, p. 5.

<sup>262</sup> David Baxter, 'Cyclists aim to put a spoke in metro route', *Evening Post*, 3<sup>rd</sup> November 1989, p. 10.

Cyclebag undertaking a poster and letter writing campaign, galvanising other groups to protest against the metro and petitioned against the metro in Parliament.<sup>263</sup>

Cyclebag were able to galvanise the local community to undertake a sustained campaign highlighting the importance of protecting cycling infrastructure in the city. It organised rallies to the council offices, collected petitions and organised public meetings in the areas along the route of the path.<sup>264</sup> It also argued that the metro would lead to ten years of chaos in the city centre as the system was constructed.<sup>265</sup> Jack Penrose, consult to ATA, explained the problems created by different claims to the path:

There was a fear element in it. You can see the other argument, you've got a marvellous route between Bristol and Bath to take away a hell of a lot of the traffic with trams going to and fro, it could have been accommodated but we didn't get far enough, and I don't think it was handled as well as it could have been.... I think both ATA and the cycle fraternity could have done much more to alleviate some of the fears on this because when it was proposed to go down the route, there were pictures of children and people on bicycles all being crushed by trams.<sup>266</sup>

---

<sup>263</sup> Bruno Clements, 'Cyclists rap metro peril', *Evening Post*, 26<sup>th</sup> September 1989, p. 17.; David Baxter, 'Cyclists aim to put a spoke in metro route', *Evening Post*, 3<sup>rd</sup> November 1989, p. 10.; Karen White, 'Wheels start turning in metro battle', *Evening Post*, 9<sup>th</sup> November 1989, p. 19.; David Baxter, 'Delay 'half baked' metro call', *Evening Post*, 29<sup>th</sup> November 1989, p. 11.; David Baxter, 'Metro squares up to 58 protesters', *Evening Post*, 7<sup>th</sup> February 1990, p. 3.

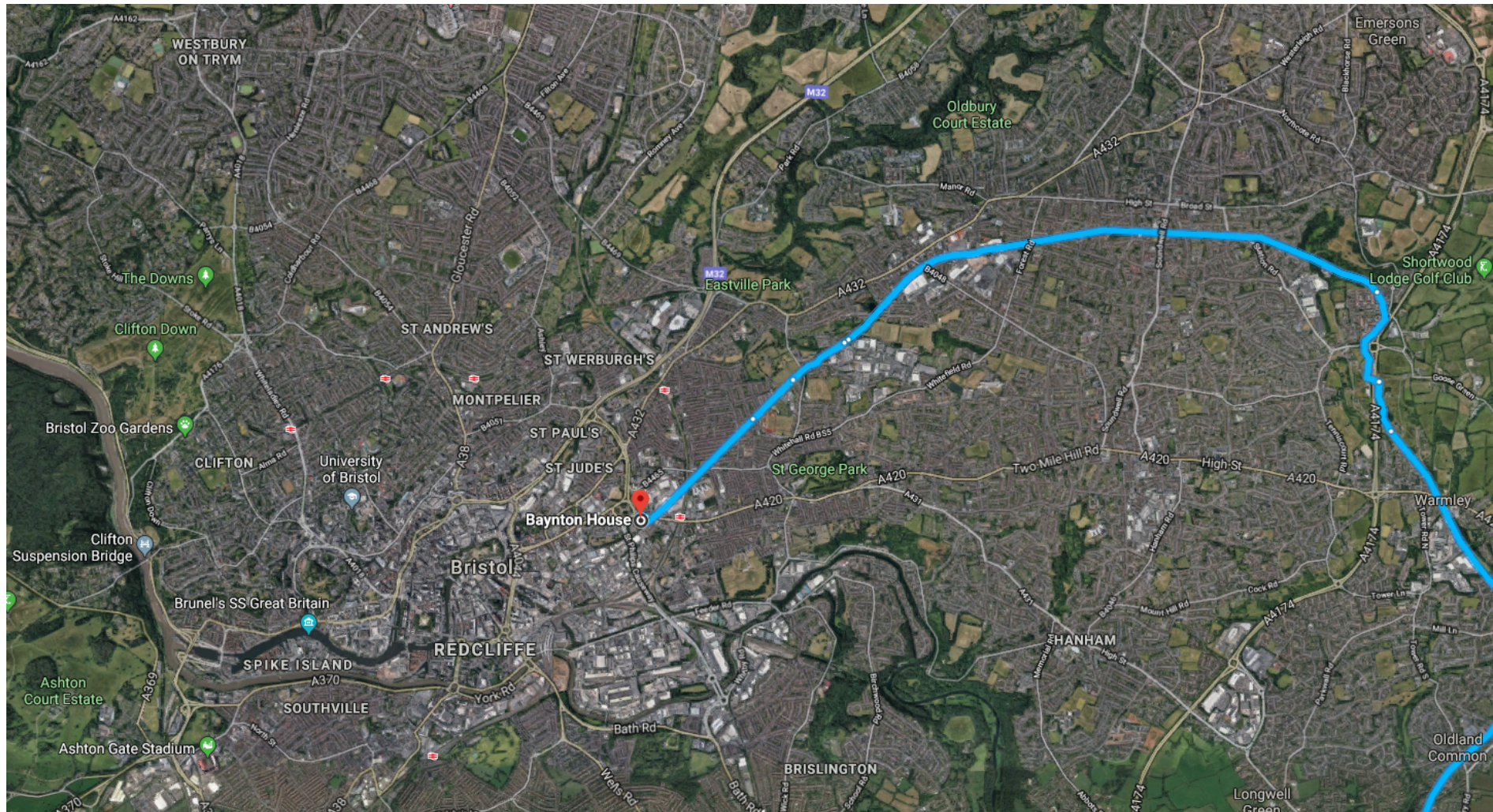
<sup>264</sup> David Baxter, 'Delay 'half baked' metro call', *Evening Post*, 29<sup>th</sup> November 1989, p. 11.; David Baxter, 'Cyclists ride to save rail bypass', *Evening Post*, 5<sup>th</sup> September 1990, p. 11.

<sup>265</sup> David Baxter, 'Ten years of turmoil', *Evening Post*, 6<sup>th</sup> December 1989, p. 1.

<sup>266</sup> Interview with Jack Penrose, p. 42.

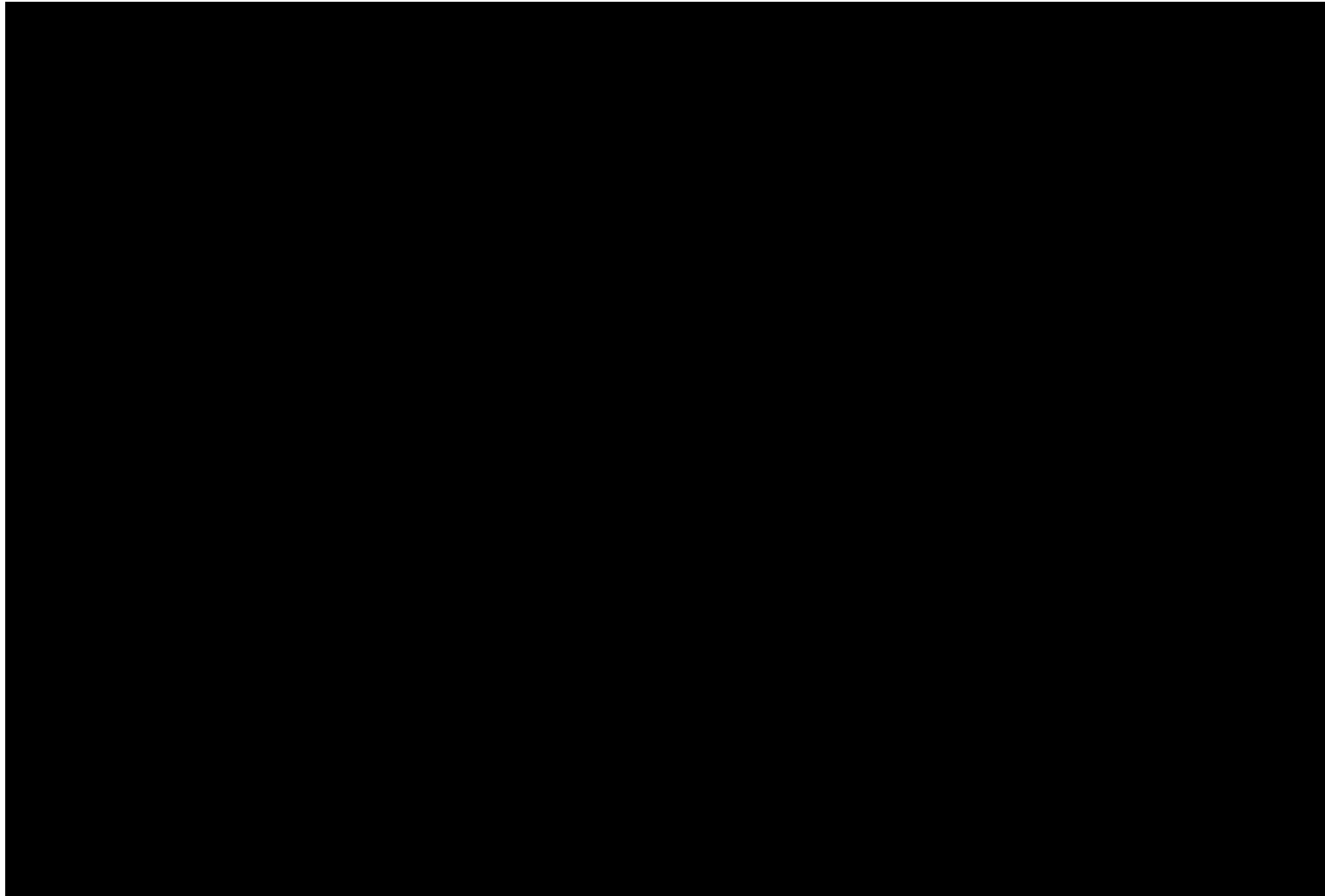


Figure. 12. Route of the Bristol to Bath Railway Path through Bristol.<sup>267</sup>



<sup>267</sup> Google Maps, 'Route of the Bristol to Bath Railway Path', 2017, [Authors own adaptation].

*Figure. 13. The entry portal to the Staple Hill Tunnel.<sup>268</sup>*



---

<sup>268</sup> C.R. Jennings, 'Staple Hill East Portal, situated between Mangotsfield and Bristol', 2013, [online] available at: <http://crjennings.com/The%20Remains%20of%20Britains%20Steam%20Age%20Railway/Rems%2028.html> accessed 20<sup>th</sup> December 2017.



The group bitterly condemned the metro's claims that it was an environmentally acceptable alternative to the private car, with Chris Hutt arguing that 'cycling already accounts for as many journeys in Avon as ATA claim will be made on the metro'.<sup>269</sup> Cyclebag had its own vision of a network of cyclepaths and greenways around the city and it was clear that losing the Railway Path would mean that cycling would not be taken seriously enough for the implementation of these.<sup>270</sup> The fight over the Railway Path was about where cycling stood in the transport hierarchy and its advocates attempts to gain it a more valued position. Cyclebag forced ATA to undertake a study examining other routes the metro could take to preserve the Railway Path, but ATA continued to insist that this was the most cost-effective route.<sup>271</sup> Eventually in June 1991, Cyclebag's campaign forced ATA to put plans to use the Railway Path on hold to focus on other, simpler, routes into the city.<sup>272</sup> This represented a landmark success for cycling. The tactics used by Cyclebag in promoting cycling and the protection of cycle routes would be replicated by Sustrans across the country proving to have long-term implications for cycling as a mode of transport.<sup>273</sup> Sustrans would, by the early 1990s, gain £43.5million in government funding to create the 'National Cycle Network', with the Railway Path forming the very first section.<sup>274</sup> The group would continue to help shape cycling infrastructure through to the present day as a result. The fight over the Railway Path had formed a vital stage in cycling's development and represented the first key victory for cycling and the realisation that it could form an important and viable contributor to the transport policy agenda within cities.

---

<sup>269</sup> 'Cyclists on course to fight the metro', *Evening Post*, 24<sup>th</sup> July 1990, p. 13

<sup>270</sup> Chris Hutt, 'A rail scheme on the wrong track', *Evening Post*, 6<sup>th</sup> December 1989, p. 59.

<sup>271</sup> David Baxter, 'Metro route options unveiled', *Evening Post*, 14<sup>th</sup> August 1990, p. 2; David Baxter, 'Metro's £72m route 'is on right track'', *Evening Post*, 15<sup>th</sup> August 1990, p. 5.

<sup>272</sup> David Baxter, 'Metro chiefs put troubled route on ice', *Evening Post*, 3<sup>rd</sup> June 1991, p. 5.

<sup>273</sup> John Le Couteur, 'Cyclists' fun time at end of tunnel', *Evening Post*, 2<sup>nd</sup> July 1987, p. 12.

<sup>274</sup> Tibenham, (2001), 252-253.; Tim Jones, 'Getting the British back on bicycles – The effects of urban traffic-free paths on everyday cycling', *Transport Policy*, 20 (2012), 139.

ATA also acted as a catalyst for other ideas on how to implement a cost-effective metro. In 1986 the company had changed mode for the metro from an underground railway to street-running trams based on reducing the cost of the system. In 1991, Badgerline announced its GLT concept developing this idea further, offering the same high-capacity, high-speed service that ATA offered at a fraction of the cost. The concept, shown in figure 14, was for a long single-decker bus divided into three sections, that could run on either a segregated path, using a guided rail and under electric power, or on roads using a diesel engine. This gave the concept the flexibility to run on roads and bus lanes in the city centre where installing dedicated infrastructure would be costly or contentious, whilst outside the city centre it could use disused railway lines where they were available. This would lower the cost of providing a metro to around £40 million in the hope that this lower figure might convince the government to provide Badgerline with a grant towards the systems construction.<sup>275</sup> This showed the increasing importance of overall cost within mass transit projects.

GLT also took inspiration, as the Avon Metro had once done, from the continent and gained widespread support soon after its announcement; particularly from groups in opposition to the metro such as Bristol Civic Society. This showed how cost, flexibility and less radical proposals were important to schemes obtaining support in the city. Yet, despite the original intention of GLT complimenting the metro, it proved to be one of the final factors which contributed to the loss of faith in ATA as public momentum started to shift towards this system and through ATA's continued financial problems.<sup>276</sup> In ATA's dying days another project was launched which proposed to use

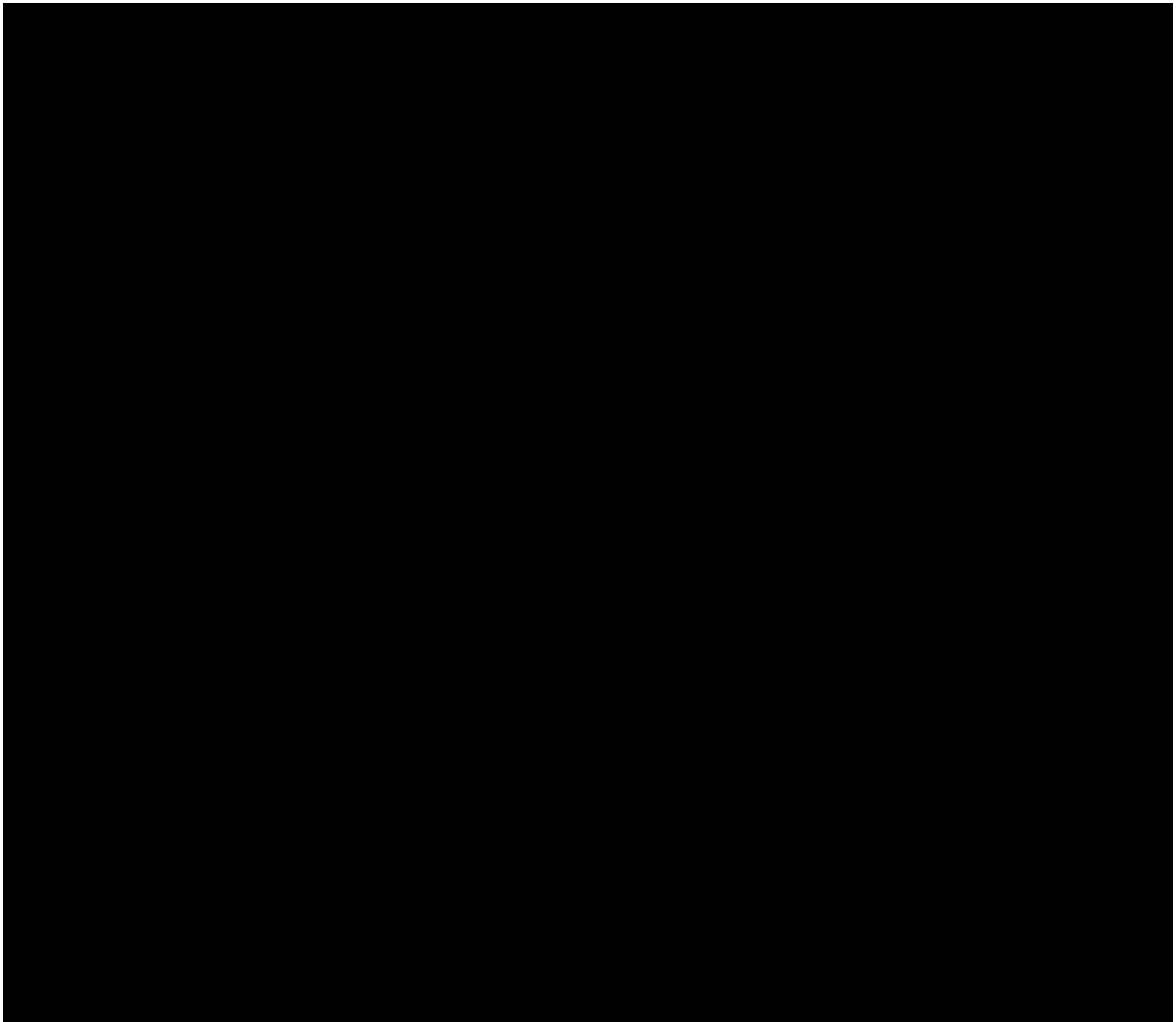
---

<sup>275</sup>Nigel Dando, 'Return of the city trams', *Evening Post*, 6<sup>th</sup> September 1991, p. 1.; Nigel Dando, 'Supertram hopes to be city guiding light', *Evening Post*, 16<sup>th</sup> September 1991, p. 5.

<sup>276</sup> Nigel Dando, 'Civic group backs city trams move', *Evening Post*, 9<sup>th</sup> October 1991, p. 5.; Christine Alsford, 'Residents say 'Yes' to Supertrams network', *Evening Post*, 13<sup>th</sup> November 1991, p. 6.; Vincent Moss, 'City's Supertram bid gets vote of welcome', *Evening Post*, 28<sup>th</sup> November 1991, p. 27.

the Portishead Line, which ATA already had permission to use from the first act, to run another guided bus route along.<sup>277</sup> This showed a growing inclination for public transportation companies to promote bus-based metro solutions as a less contentious and cheaper option to implement than light rail.

*Figure. 14. Guided Light Transit Bus show bus on segregated pathway.*<sup>278</sup>



---

<sup>277</sup> James Freeman and Keith Tazewell, 'Some developments of rapid transit in Avon', *Proceedings of the Institution of Civil Engineers – Municipal Engineer*, 98 (1993), 190 – 192.

<sup>278</sup> Guided Light Transit 400, CityLine promotional leaflet, 0874666, Bristol Central Library.

In summary, between 1989 and 1992, the Avon Metro had successfully acted as a catalyst to opening debate within the city of Bristol about the need to improve its transport infrastructure. Car dominance in the city was beginning to break down as the authorities recognised the impact of the car on the urban centre, finally reacting to the original message of the metro. Significant developments in restraining the car occurred including the return of Queen Square to a public space - removing a key aspect of the city's Inner Circuit Road, and the adoption of policies aimed at reducing the impact of the car and promoting public transport. There had been an increased focus on alternatives to the car, with a plethora now available. Yet alternatives to the car continued to come into conflict as seen by the fight over the Railway Path. Even in defeat over this conflict, ATA contributed to an important development by giving Cyclebag a platform to promote the role of cycling. This helped cycling to emerge as a recognised and valuable part of the transport agenda both locally and nationally. Lastly the lessons learnt about reducing the overall cost of a metro system were also taken up by other private companies, as seen by the GLT system, which promised to provide similar metro benefits at a lower cost and greater flexibility than a rail-based metro. Whilst this would undermine support for the metro and contribute to the schemes collapse, the GLT project had learnt several lessons from the Avon metro proposals.<sup>279</sup> Eventually, in 2006, it would be a version of this that would be adopted by the West of England Partnership as the version of the metro which would be built, opening to the public in 2018 under the name 'Metrobus'.

---

<sup>279</sup> Ian Onions and Nigel Dando, 'Blow for metro as bus firm pulls out', *Evening Post*, 13<sup>th</sup> December 1991, p. 5.; Nigel Dando and Ian Onions, 'Death of a metro dream', *Evening Post*, 11<sup>th</sup> March 1992, p. 2.

### Conclusions from Chapter Three

This chapter charted the changing fortunes of ATA's neoliberal recrafting of transport governance between 1989 and 1992 and examined why the project ultimately failed. It has also examined how the Avon Metro concept started to influence other transport developments within the city of Bristol and influence policy leaders to reshape the city away from dominance by the automobile. In doing so, several key developments are identified.

ATA modified its neoliberal recrafting of transport governance to include a role for the tiers of local governance in the region. This was a step-away from the original plan to evade these institutions completely and instead sought greater co-operation. This hybrid model showed that despite the Thatcher government's attempts to diminish the importance of local government, its influence remained important. In fact, a different, more palatable model for neoliberal urban regeneration was created with the private sector reacting to local circumstances and working *with* local government and not working in isolation from local government as seen in the UDCs. Whilst ATA presented a less radical concept in this period, the project remained radical in nature as the Avon Metro idea was still led by a private company which was different to any other transport project in the UK at this time.

Whilst the methodology to obtain a metro had proved feasible and local governmental opposition was reduced, the company was unfortunate in facing an economic recession which restricted ability to gain finance from developments to fund construction of the system. This showed the weakness in ATA's model. Private finance is dependent on market conditions; when the market faced a downturn, the funding evaporated. Whilst there was potential for the government to step-in and help fund the

system, via a grant, it declined to do so due to the rules for grants not keeping pace with ATA's model. Neoliberal policies pursued by the government, such as the UDC's still required initial governmental help to encourage urban regeneration to take place, but no governmental help was forthcoming in this case – partly due to legislation for grants not keeping up with developments such as ATA's model. Therefore, the failure of ATA was a multi-layered failure of both the market and the state. Despite this, it had been successful in showing that there was the potential for a privately-funded and privately-led concept with greater financing to follow this model.

The real impact of ATA's model had been to stimulate interest in solving the problems in the urban transport fabric of the city. Other private companies started to offer transport solutions, such as Badgerline and the GLT system and this highlighted the importance of cost as well as quality. Whilst GLT was not the ultimate reason for ATA's failure, it was proof of the difficulties of introducing market forces into urban transport infrastructure provision. Another solution was the local government finally starting to take improving urban transportation seriously with the move away from a car dominated model of city design and towards a multi-modal approach. The County Council finally adopted LRT as policy, something that Cottrell had been calling for all the way back to 1979, and a variety of projects were undertaken to begin to restrain the impact of the car. The return of Queen Square to a public space being one example of efforts to redesign the urban centre into a 'people friendly' space with the pedestrian at its heart rather than the car.

A third, unexpected, result of the development of the metro in this period had been the future effect on cycling policy both locally and nationally seen through events involving the Railway Path. The metro also changed perceptions of the value of the bicycle as a mode of urban transport. It's attempts to gain control over the path had

caused Cyclebag to perfect a campaign to protect this route and defend the importance of cycling. This acted as a starting point for recognition of the importance of cycling with the Railway Path becoming one of the key parts of the national cycle network as a result. Cycling infrastructure would also, subsequently, be extended into cities, improving the urban environment and redesigning the city away from the car in a process that continues to this day and the metro had an important role in this occurring.

## Conclusion

### *Post-script - After Advanced Transport for Avon*

Richard Cottrell's concept of an Avon Metro was never realised. Yet it did open a conversation in the city of Bristol about how to solve the city's transport problems that continues to this day. The newest proposal, by the City Council, is for a city-wide underground network to be operational within the next ten years, costing in the region of £4billion.<sup>280</sup> This return to the concept of an underground railway brings the metro idea full-circle back to the original 1979 proposals and is the latest project that aims to see the realisation of a metro in the city.

Following ATA's failure, Avon County Council adapted ATA's metro plans into 'the Westway' project, however Avon was abolished following reform of local government before construction could begin. Next, Bristol City Council, working with its newly created neighbour South Gloucestershire Council, drew up plans for a 'supertram' between the city centre and the north of the city.<sup>281</sup> This project was eventually dropped in 2004 following disagreements between the two councils over the exact route the supertram should take.<sup>282</sup> By 2008, the City Council, working with new regional organisation the West of England Partnership, proposed the concept of Bus Rapid Transport (BRT) – similar to GLT, as the solution to Bristol's transport problems.<sup>283</sup> In the early stages of this project, the council proposed a route running on the Bristol to Bath Railway Path which was quickly shelved following wide-spread

---

<sup>280</sup> Esme Ashcroft and Krishan Davis, 'Bristol will have a £4bn underground railway 'within 10 years', says Mayor Marvin Rees', *Bristol Post [Online]*, 14<sup>th</sup> December 2017, available at: <http://www.bristolpost.co.uk/news/bristol-news/bristol-4bn-underground-rail-network-929360> accessed 15/12/17.

<sup>281</sup> 'Train plans on track', *BBC News [Online]*, 11<sup>th</sup> December 2001, available at: <http://news.bbc.co.uk/1/hi/england/1703966.stm> accessed 15/12/17.

<sup>282</sup> 'Tram plans derailed', *BBC News [Online]*, 8<sup>th</sup> January 2003, available at: <http://news.bbc.co.uk/1/hi/england/2637739.stm> accessed 15/12/17.

<sup>283</sup> 'Hundreds protest over bus plans', *BBC News [Online]*, 5<sup>th</sup> February 2008, available at: <http://news.bbc.co.uk/1/hi/england/bristol/7229453.stm> accessed 15/12/17.



protests, led by Sustrans.<sup>284</sup> Despite this early setback, the rest of this system has been constructed and is due to open in early-2018 following controversy over cost increases, disruption and delays.<sup>285</sup> The West of England Partnership has also pursued improving railways services over both existing and disused lines around the city with its MetroWest project.<sup>286</sup> These projects all show that the original ideas of the Avon Metro to reduce traffic congestion in the urban centre, provide an effective transport network and utilise to a much greater capacity the railway infrastructure around the city, continue to be pursued to this day.

### Conclusions from this thesis

The overarching contribution to historical scholarship from this thesis is to provide an alternative view to the unfolding of urban neoliberalism during this period. Whereas Urban Development Corporations were central government appointed bodies and the enterprise zones were government policies, the Avon Metro evolved into a theoretically more advanced form of neoliberalism that originally envisioned no funding and limited involvement from both central or local government at all in urban regeneration. It is therefore within this context that the development of ATA really represents the purest expression of neoliberal far in advance of what Wetherall argues in his work. ATA provided a model for an alternative expression of neoliberalism that

---

<sup>284</sup> 'Bus lane scheme hits the buffers', *BBC News [Online]*, 29<sup>th</sup> March 2008, available at: <http://news.bbc.co.uk/1/hi/england/bristol/7320101.stm> accessed 15/12/17.

<sup>285</sup> Esme Ashcroft, 'Bristol MetroBus 'likely' to be delayed until 2018 because ticket machines are not ready', *Bristol Post [Online]*, 27<sup>th</sup> September 2017, available at: <http://www.bristolpost.co.uk/news/bristol-news/bristol-metrobus-likely-delayed-until-539623> accessed 15/12/17.;

<sup>286</sup> Esme Ashcroft, 'Portishead rail line is 'not dead in the water' promises Transport Secretary Chris Grayling', *Bristol Post [Online]*, 6<sup>th</sup> July 2017, available at: <http://www.bristolpost.co.uk/news/bristol-news/portishead-rail-line-not-dead-174682> accessed 15/12/17.; 'Travel Investment', *West of England Partnership [Online]*, 19<sup>th</sup> August 2016, available at: <http://westofenglandlep.co.uk/place/transport-investment> accessed 15/12/17.

has not been studied before. The birth of the concept of this model and its evolution, reacting to the local conditions in the city of Bristol, provides new evidence to support Peck's idea that neoliberalism only exists in an impure form, or as a messy hybrid.<sup>287</sup> The work also provides a further development of Brenner and Theodore's argument that neoliberalism relies on the mobilisation of the state, does not exist in a pure state, generates path dependant outcomes and evolves.<sup>288</sup> This research provides context for an alternative model of urban neoliberalism that moved from excluding the tiers of local authorities to including them and showed the extremes, and limitations to, the neoliberal agenda in a way that has not been shown before.

This research explored three research questions about the changing nature of the city between 1979 and 1992. How the Avon Metro reflected the changing environment of governance in the city, what the development of the metro showed about the changing nature of the city due to the emergence of neoliberalism and the limitations of this agenda and the ways in which the Avon Metro showed a shifting attitude towards mobility and the automobile. The work makes the following contributions to historical scholarship:

The Avon Metro was, throughout its development, always a concept that reacted to poor urban transportation and structural problems in finance and government in the county of Avon. Whilst at first envisioned to find ways to improve the structure from within, by 1987 the project moved to provide an alternative structure. This structure reflected the unfolding neoliberal environment and sought to bypass the ineffective and underfunded tiers of local government. This reflected a central government-led marginalisation of local government and encouragement of private

---

<sup>287</sup> Jamie Peck, *Constructions of Neoliberal Reason*, (Oxford University Press: Oxford, 2010), p.8-9.

<sup>288</sup> Neil Brenner and Nik Theodore, 'Neoliberalism and the urban condition', *City*, 9-1 (2005), 102-103.

finance but went further by being a private company aiming to take land off the City Council and not a board appointed by central government like the Urban development Corporations. Yet following experience and opposition, the concept evolved again into attempting to include both tiers of local government into the project by 1989. This showed some of the limitations in the model of trying to do too much against the tiers of local government and the conflict this resulted in and more towards a partnership, or hybrid model. Reactions by the tiers of local government were therefore important as ATA lacked the ability for its proposals to be steamrolled through by central government, like the Urban Development Corporations were, due to the concept being led by a private company from the outset. What the initial opposition had done however was to delay the project so that the economic and political conditions had changed by the time that consensus had been reached. Yet even following ATA adopting a hybrid model by offering partnership with the tiers of local governance, it still remained a radical concept with strong distinctions from other concurrent public transportation projects at this time such as the Manchester Metrolink and the Docklands Light Railway which both operated under the direction of local government as a private company continued to steer the project. ATA's evolution shows the 'hybrid' nature of neoliberalism as argued by Peck whereby it is always unfolds in an 'impure' form, the reactions to local conditions as argued by Brenner and Theodore in its initial concept as a way to solve the problems of financing and in its reaction to hostility by the tiers of government and the requirement for a 'man of vision' as argued by Harvey with Cottrell steering and promoting the project.<sup>289</sup> ATA therefore provided an essential experiment in how far neoliberal ideas could be used during this time but was beaten

---

<sup>289</sup> Jamie Peck, *Constructions of Neoliberal Reason*, (Oxford University Press: Oxford, 2010), p.8-9.; Neil Brenner and Nik Theodore, 'Neoliberalism and the urban condition', *City*, 9-1 (2005), 102-103.; Harvey, (1989), 7.

more by the changing conditions than by a failure in its model. It was when conditions changed that the concept fell apart.

The work identifies the changing nature of governance during this period from the problems caused by the long-term ramifications of the Local Government Act (1974) to the attempts to solve these through private finance and the eventual acceptance of the role of private finance by those once bitterly opposed to it. This shows the importance of the long-term failures of this act in holding back the effective development of the city of Bristol due to the creation of an ineffective structure as there was a lack of co-ordination and financing as a result. The changing nature of this opposition can be seen by the DLP's strong initial opposition to ATA based on its neoliberal foundations but eventually dropping its opposition and even privatising Bristol's Port as these ideas came to be accepted. Yet limitations to this changing nature of governance is also seen as shown by the inability of central government to provide ATA with a grant due to legislation for the provision of grants not keeping pace with what ATA's private model. Another limitation is the exposure of purely privately financed projects to market conditions due to the delay in funding due to the recession. This shows that relying on private finance and enterprise alone is very tricky for mass urban transportation systems. Despite these failures there are several clear successes that were a result of this model. By resurrecting the methodology used to authorise the construction of the original railway network, ATA were able to show that there was an alternative way of developing urban transportation projects. Bristol City Council identified that the flaws in local governance was what allowed ATA to take the lead in

pioneer a transport plan for the area and dictate the terms of the public debate when providing evidence to the Local Government Commission in 1992.<sup>290</sup>

The concept also helped to make the tiers of local government take the impact of the car seriously and begin attempts to alleviate this as seen by the restoration of Queen Square and the adoption by Avon County Council of LRT as policy. The Avon Metro created a discussion within the city for the first time about the need to improve public transportation and highlighted the role that disused railway lines could play in this. The Avon Metro also had an impact nationally being the first modern metro system designed to mitigate the problems of congestion something which all subsequent metro systems developed also adopted, the importance of this has not been identified previously. Additionally, by promoting a concept led by a private company, ATA unleashed market conditions and competition into urban transport infrastructure that eventually contributed to its own demise as other companies stepped forward offering competing proposals that could be implemented at a lower cost. The metro also had another role in helping to shape the tactics and direction of the cycling advocacy movement which eventually resulted in the railway path becoming the first section of the national cycle network to protect this route. As a result, cycling policy was directly affected by the metro in providing as model and increased role for the potential of cycling within the urban transportation agenda. It is all these impacts which could be considered the greatest achievement of the metro despite its failures with this research helping the concept to be recognised in its rightful place in history.

---

<sup>290</sup> Bristol City Council, 'The Government of Bristol – Submission to Local Government Commission', December 1992, p. 5 - 7, M/BCC/BC/1/111, Bristol Archives

## Bibliography

### Primary Sources

Advanced Transport for Avon Limited, 'Light Rail Transit in Avon' (ATA: Bristol, 1987).

An Initial Study for Avon Metro', *Modern Railways*, January 1980, 20 – 23.

Avon County Council, Minutes of the Avon Light Rail Transit Special Committee, ACC/M/PHT/ALRT, Bristol Archives.

Avon County Council, Minutes of the Planning and Highways Committee of Avon County Council, ACC/M/PH/26 Bristol Archives.

Avon Metro: Initial Study, Bristol: Whicheloe Macfarlane Partnership (1979), Bristol Central Lending Library Y5853374

Avon Metro 1979 – 1989 – Collection of Newspaper Articles, Y5795168, Bristol Archives

*BBC News* [Online] (London)

Bristol City Council, Minutes of the ATA subcommittee, M/BCC/ATA/1. Bristol Archives

Bristol City Council, 'The Government of Bristol – Submission to Local Government Commission', December 1992, p. 7, M/BCC/BC/1/111, Bristol Archives

*Bristol Journal* (Bristol)

*Bristol Post* [online] (Bristol)

Buchanan, Colin, *Traffic in Towns* (London: Penguin, 1963)

Cottrell, Richard, 'A Metro for Avon?', *Modern Railways*, January 1980, 18 – 20.

Crossrail, 'funding', (2017) [online] available at: <http://www.crossrail.co.uk/about-us/funding>

*European Parliament election turnout 1979 – 2014*, [Online], available at:

<http://www.ukpolitical.info/european-parliament-election-turnout.htm>

*Evening Post* (Bristol)

Fowler, Bob, 'A Rapid Transit System for Bristol', 13<sup>th</sup> May 2003 [online] available at:

<https://brlsi.org/events-proceedings/proceedings/18088> accessed 30<sup>th</sup> December 2017.

Guided Light Transit 400, CityLine promotional leaflet, 0874666, Bristol Central Library.

House of Commons Background Paper: Private Bills in Parliament, 7<sup>th</sup> January 2014,

<http://researchbriefings.parliament.uk/ResearchBriefing/Summary/SN06508>

HC Deb 24<sup>th</sup> January 1989, vol. 145, col 956-964.

House of Commons Information Office, 'Private Bills - House of Commons Information Office Factsheet L4', HCIO (2010), p. 1 -2 [online] available at

<https://www.parliament.uk/documents/commons-information-office/l04.pdf>

House of Commons, Transport Committee: Urban public transport: the light rail option. Minutes of evidence May 1990 (HC 308-IV), (London: The Stationary Office, 1990),

Interview with Jack Penrose

Mars, Colin, 'In the news: negotiating a transport planning gain agreement', (2014), [online] available at: <https://jobs.planningresource.co.uk/article/in-the-news-negotiating-a-transport-planning-gain-agreement/>

Office for National Statistics, *1981 Census Population estimates - Table 8 – Local Authority Quinary age groups*, [Online] available at: <http://webarchive.nationalarchives.gov.uk/20160107185217/http://www.ons.gov.uk/ons/publications/re-reference-tables.html?edition=tcm%3A77-162562>

Passenger Transport Executive Group, '25 years of the passenger transport authorities and executives', *Passenger Transport Executive Group*, [online], available at: [www.urbantransportgroup.org/system/files/general-docs/25YearsofPTEs.pdf](http://www.urbantransportgroup.org/system/files/general-docs/25YearsofPTEs.pdf)

Roth, Andrew, 'Obituary – Lord Cocks of Hartcliffe', *The Guardian Online* <https://www.theguardian.com/news/2001/mar/27/guardianobituaries> accessed 18/10/17.

Royal Charter of Edward III, 20<sup>th</sup> December 1373. Contained within: R.B. Mowat (ed.), *Bristol Charters Vol.1 1155 – 1373* (Bristol: Bristol Record Society, 1930), p. 171.

*The Times* (London)

*Transport Policy (White Paper)*, Ministry of Transport, July 1966 p. 13. [online], available at: <http://www.urbantransportgroup.org/resources/types/documents/transport-policy-white-paper-1966>

*Western Daily Press* (Bristol)



'Travel Investment', *West of England Partnership [Online]*, 19<sup>th</sup> August 2016, available at: <http://westofenglandlep.co.uk/place/transport-investment>

## Secondary Works

Aldred, Rachel, 'Governing Transport from Welfare State to Hollow State: The Case of Cycling in the UK', *Transport Policy* 23 (2012) 95 – 102.

Bartlett, J.V., I.F. Hartley & P. Layfield, 'Tyne and Wear Metro: Management of the Project', *Proceedings of the Institution of Civil Engineers*, 70 (1981), 669 – 693.

Beatty, Christina and Russell Haywood, 'Changes in travel behaviour in the English Passenger Transport Executives' areas 1981 – 1991', *Journal of Transport Geography*, 5-1 (1997), 61-72.

Brenner, Neil, and Nik Theodore, 'Neoliberalism and the urban condition', *City*, 9-1 (2005), 101-107.

Bunschoten, T, E.J.E. Molin & R. Van Nes, 'Tram or Bus: Does the Tram Bonus Exist', *European Transport Conference Paper* (2013).

Byne, Eugenie, *Unbuilt Bristol: 1750 – 2050*, (Redcliffe Press: Bristol, 2013)

Chandler, J.A., *Explaining local government*, Manchester University Press: Manchester (2007).

Cherry, Gordon, 'Britain and the Metropolis: Urban Change and Planning in Perspective', *The Town Planning Review* 55-1 (1984), 5-33.

Cullinane, Sharon, 'Attitudes towards the car in the UK: Some implications for policies on congestion and the environment', *Transport Research Part A: Policy and Practice*, 26-4 (1992), 291 – 301.

Dalton, Russell, J. & Robert Duval, 'The Political Environment and Foreign Policy Opinions: British Attitudes towards European Integration, 1972 – 1979', 113-134.

Davis, Aeron and Catherine Walsh, 'Distinguishing Financialisation from Neoliberalism', *Theory, Culture and Society*, 34, (2017), 27 – 51.

Deas, Iain, Brian Robson & Michael Bradford, 'Re-thinking the Urban Development Corporation 'Experiment': The Case of Central Manchester, Leeds and Bristol', *Progress in Planning* 54 (2000), 1-72.

Docherty, Iain, 'Rail transport policy-making in UK Passenger Transport Authority areas', *Journal of Transport Geography* 8 (2000), 157-170.

Dow, Christopher, *Major Recessions: Britain and the World 1920-1995*, (Oxford: UK, 2000).

Freeman, James and Keith Tazewell, 'Some developments of rapid transit in Avon', *Proceedings of the institution of Civil Engineers – Municipal Engineer*, 98 (1993), 187 – 193.

Foster, Mark S., 'The Automobile in the Urban Environment: Planning for an Energy-Short Future', *The Public Historian*, 3-4 (1981) 23-31.

Fox-Rogers, Linda, & Enda Murphy 'From brown envelopes to community benefits: The co-option of planning gain agreements under deepening neoliberalism', *Geoforum*, 67 (2015), 41-50.

Geddes, Mike, 'Neoliberalism and local governance: Radical developments in Latin America', *Urban Studies* 51-15 (2014), 3147-3163.

Gore, Tony, 'Public / Private partnership schemes in UK Urban Regeneration: The role of Joint enabling agencies', *Cities*, 8-3 (1991), 209 – 216.

Green, Judith, Rebecca Steinbach, Emma Garnet, Nicola Christie and Lindsay Prior, 'automobility reconfigured? Ironic seductions and mundane freedoms in 16-21-year olds' accounts of car driving and ownership', *Mobilities* (2017), 1-15.

Green, Oliver, *Rails in the Road: A History of Tramways in Great Britain and Ireland*, (Pen and Sword: Barnsley, 2016).

Griffiths, Paul, Peter Adams and Ann Cheung, 'Midland Metro expansion, UK', *Proceedings of the Institution of Civil Engineers – Transport*, 167 (2014), 134-142.

Gunn, Simon, 'The Buchanan Report, Environment and the Problem of Traffic in 1960s Britain', *Twentieth Century British History* 22-4 (2011), 521-541.

Gunn, Simon, 'People and the Car: The Expansion of Automobility in Urban Britain c.1955-70', *Social History* 38-2 (2013), 220-237.

Hagman, Donald G., 'English Planning and Environmental Law and Administration: The 1970s', *Journal of the American Planning Association* 46-2 (1980), 162-171.

Hall, J.R. and G.J.D. Porter, 'The Design, Build, Operate and Maintain contract as applied to Manchester's Metrolink – Informal discussion', *The Proceedings of the Institution of Civil Engineers – Transport*, 111-4 (1995), 310 – 313.

Hall, Peter, *Cities of Tomorrow: An Intellectual History of Urban Planning and Design Since 1880*, (Wiley Blackwell: Chichester, 2014).

Harvey, David, *A Brief History of Neoliberalism*, (Oxford University Press: Oxford, 2005).

Harvey, David, 'From Managerialism to Entrepreneurialism: The Transformation in Urban Governance in Late Capitalism', *Geografiska Annaler Series B Human Geography*, 71-1 (1989), 3-17.

Hass – Klau, Carman, 'Impact of pedestrianization and traffic calming on retailing – A review of the evidence from Germany and the UK', *Transport Policy*, 1 (1993), 21-31.

Haughton, Graham and Aiden While, 'From Corporate City to Citizens City? – Urban Leadership after Local Entrepreneurialism in the United Kingdom', *Urban Affairs Review*, 35-1 (September) 1999, 3-23.

Haywood, Russell, 'Mind the Gap: Town Planning and Manchester's Local Railway Network: 1947 – 1996', *European Planning Studies* 6-2 (1998), 187-210.

Hill, Dilys M., 'Values and Judgements: The Case of Planning in England since 1947', *International Political Science Review*, 1-2 (1980), 149-167.

Howard, D.F. & P. Layfield, 'Tyne and Wear Metro: concept, organisation and operation', *Proceedings of the Institute of Civil Engineers*, 70 (1981), 651 – 668.

Hubbard, Phil, 'Urban Design and City Regeneration: Social Representations of Entrepreneurial Landscapes', *Urban Studies* 33-8 (1996) 1441 - 1461.

Jessop, Bob, 'Margaret Thatcher and Thatcherism: Dead but not buried', *British Politics*, 10-1 (2015), 16-30.

John, Peter, 'The Great Survivor: The Persistence and Resilience of English Local Government', *Local Government Studies*, 40-5 (2014), 687-704.

Jolly, Stephen and Bob Bayman, *Docklands Light Railway – Official Handbook*, (Capital Transport: Harrow Weald, 1986).

Jones, Daniel Stedman, *Masters of the Universe: Hayek, Friedman, and the birth of Neoliberal Politics*, (Princeton University Press: New Jersey, 2012).

Jones, Tim, 'Getting the British back on bicycles – The effects of urban traffic-free paths on everyday cycling', *Transport Policy*, 20 (2012), 139.

Knowles, R.D. 'Transport impacts of Manchester's Metrolink', *Journal of Transport Geography*, 4-1 (1996), 1-14.

Knowles R.D. and Fiona Ferbrache, 'Evaluation of wider economic impacts of light rail investments on cities', *Journal of Transport Geography*, 54 (2016), 430 – 439.

Lawless, Paul, 'Urban Development Corporations and their alternatives', *Cities*, 5-3 (1988), 277 - 289.

Leach, Steve and Chris Game, 'English Metropolitan Government since abolition: An evaluation of the abolition of the English Metropolitan County Councils', *Public Administration*, 69-2 (1991) 141-170

Mullard, Maurice and Raymond Swaray, 'The Politics of Public Expenditure from Thatcher to Blair', *Policy and Politics*, 34-3 (2006), 495 – 516.

Mirò, Sònia Vives, 'Producing a "Successful City": Neoliberal Urbanism and the Gentrification in the Tourist City – The Case of Palma (Majorca)', *Urban Studies Research*, 2011 (2011), 1-13.

Nash, C.A., 'Policies towards suburban rail services in Britain and the Federal Republic of Germany – a comparison', *Transport Reviews*, 5-3 (1985), 269 – 282.

Ogdon, Eric and John Senior, *Metrolink – Official Handbook*, (Derbyshire: Transport Publishing Company, 1991).

Ortolano, Guy, 'Planning the Urban Future in 1960s Britain', *The Historical Journal* 54-2 (2011), 477-507.

Owens, Susan, 'From 'predict and provide' to 'predict and prevent'? Pricing and Planning in Transport Policy', *Transport Policy*, 2-1 (1995), 43-49.

Parsons, Rorie and Geoff Vigar, "Resistance was futile! Cycling's discourses of resistance to UK automobile modernism 1950-1970", *Planning Perspectives*, (2017), 1-21.

Peck, Jamie, *Constructions of Neoliberal Reason*, (Oxford University Press: Oxford, 2010).

Peck, Jaime & Adam Tickell, 'Neoliberalizing Space', *Antipode*, 34 (2002), 380 – 404.

Pooley, Colin. G., and Jean Turnbull, 'The Journey to Work: A Century of Change', *Area*, 31-3 (1999), 281-292.

Pooley, Colin. G., 'Landscapes without the Car: A Counterfactual Historical Geography of Twentieth Century Britain', *Journal of Historical Geography*, 36-3 (2010), 266-275.

Pooley, Colin. G., Jean Turnbull, and Mags Adams, 'The Journey to School in Britain since the 1940s: Continuity and Change', *Area*, 37-1 (2005), 43-53.

Preston, John & Talal Almutairi, 'Evaluating the long-term impacts of transport policy: the case of bus deregulation revisited', *Research in Transportation Economics*, 48 (2014), 263-269.

Pucher, John 'Urban transport in Germany: Providing feasible alternatives to the car', *Transport Reviews*, 18:4 (1998), 285 - 310.

Russell, J.H.M. and R.J Horton, 'Planning of the South Yorkshire Supertam', *Proceedings of the Institution of Civil Engineers - Transport*, 111 (1995), 15-23.

Sandford, Mark 'Public Services and Local Government: The end of the Principle of 'funding following duties'', *Local Government Studies*, 42-4 (2016), 637 – 656.

Saumarez Smith, Otto 'The Inner-City Crisis and the End of Urban Modernism in 1970s Britain', *Twentieth Century British History*, 27-4 (2016), 578-598.

Simon, O, 'Seminar Report: Reforming the Private Bill Procedure', *Proceedings of the Institution of Civil Engineers – Municipal Engineer*, 93 – 2 (1992), 123 - 124.

Souter, I.A. 'An analysis of the development of the tramway/light rail concept in the British Isles', *Proceedings of the Institution of Mechanical Engineers*, 215 (2001), 157 - 166

Tallon, Andrew, *Urban Regeneration in the UK*, (London: Routledge, 2010).

Taner, O.C, and Steven Tiesdell, 'The London Docklands Development Corporation (LDDC), 1981 – 1991 – A perspective on the management of urban regeneration', *Town Planning Review*, 62 – 3 (1991), 311 - 330.

Thomas, Huw and Rob Imrie, 'Urban Development Corporations and Local Governance in the UK', *Journal of Economic and Social Geography*, 88-1 (1997), 53-64.

Thorpe, Andrew, *A History of the British Labour Party*, (Palgrave Macmillian: Basingstoke, 2015).

Thorsen, Dag Einar & Amund Lie. "What is Neoliberalism?" (University of Oslo: Oslo, 2011).

Tibenham, Richard, 'Sustrans: The National Cycle Network', *Local Economy: The Journal of Local Economy Policy Unit*, 16-3 (2001), 252 - 255.

Turner, Rachel, *Neo-Liberal Ideology: History, Concepts and Policies*, (Edinburgh Scholarship Online: Edinburgh, 2012).

Urry, John, *Mobilities*, (Cambridge: Polity Press, 2007)

Urry, John, 'Inhabiting the car', *Sociological Review*, 54-1 (2006), 17 – 31.

Waley, Paul, 'Pencilling Tokyo into the map of neoliberal urbanism', *Cities*, 32 (2013), 43-50.

Watson, Ann Richard Bates & Donald Kennedy (eds), *Air Pollution, the Automobile, and Public Health*, (Washington D.C.: National Academies Press, 1988)



Gary Parsons

Wetherell, Sam, 'Freedom Planned: Enterprise Zones and Urban Non-Planning in Post-War Britain', *Twentieth Century British History* 27-2 (2016), 266-289.